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A HEART-ECHO.

BY JAMES HUNGERFORD.

"I love thee!" These words of endearment my heart
Forever is softly and fondly repeating.
In days, slow and gloomy, that keep us apart,
In hours that make us so happy and fleeting,
Oh, darling, I know that thy faith is as bright,
Thy love is as true, as the heaven above thee;
And, therefore, I say, with the fullest delight,
With trust that is earnest and perfect, "I love thee!"

"I love thee!" So knew I the moment we met,
When first thy mild looks rested tenderly on me;
That sweet soul-expression I ne'er can forget,
Revealing the beautiful spirit that won me.
There never has been, since that happiest hour
When but thy dear glances I needed to prove thee
A moment I could not have sworn, with the power
Of all my full heart, before Heaven, "I love thee!"

I love thee, because, since our vows were first
pledged,
Though all my surroundings for worse have been
altered,
Though troubles and crosses my prospects have
hedged,
Thy love and thy confidence never have faltered.
Though continents, oceans, our forms should divide,
No absence or space from that troth-plight could
move thee;
And thus, too, their power on my faith is dead—
My heart's fondest words will be ever, "I love thee!"

I love thee! Though fortune be gloomy as night,
With faith in thy faith I can never be cheerless;
Thy love to my life is a ceaseless delight,
O'er all other pleasures, unconquered and peerless.
But, dearest! oh! I would I had words that were life
With light and with warmth from the heaven
above thee,
To tell to thy true heart, thou life of my life,
My joy and my darling, how wholly I love thee!

Cecil's Deceit:

OR,
THE DIAMOND LEGACY.

BY MRS. JENNIE D. BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED; OR, THE MYSTERY OF ELLSFORD GRANGE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

TWO MEN IN THE HOUSE.

A COUPLE of days later Mr. and Mrs. Frampton went together to the city, and during their sojourn there called at No. 17 street. The former had volunteered to attend to the business—whatever it might be—alone, but a mixed feeling of restlessness and curiosity would not permit Cecil to remain behind.

It was a bright afternoon which would have been pleasant in the country, but the sun beating down against brick walls and pavements made it almost intolerably warm within the city limits. They drove to the place in a private carriage, and leaving it at the door, entered.

The office of Mr. Chantry in no way differed from that of any prosperous lawyer. The outer room was large and bare, with two or three clerks' desks ranged against the walls; the clerks themselves, pale, preoccupied-looking men, seldom breaking silence by aught save the scratching of their pens or ruling of paper. An inner room furnished with carpet, table, chairs and escritoire, was where the lawyer received his clients. Into this, accordingly, Mr. and Mrs. Frampton were shown.

Mr. Chantry, a middle-aged man with a slight stoop in his shoulders and a lank, sallow countenance which ordinarily betrayed no more expression than a piece of blank parchment, placed himself immediately at their service.

Mr. Frampton introduced himself and wife and made known their business.

"This lady Captain Collingsbrooke's daughter," said the lawyer, passing the palm of one hand slowly over the back of the other and regarding Cecil attentively. "Of course you have proofs of identity?"

"Yes," Cecil replied, promptly, opening the ornate reticule she carried. "I thought such might be required and came prepared with authentic documents."

These consisted of a certificate of marriage between Captain Collingsbrooke and Eleanor, daughter of Adam Montague; a paper certifying the birth of their one child, Eve Collingsbrooke; and articles denoting the captain's former position in the queen's army, together with private letters from men well known in London.

Very satisfactory, Mr. Chantry declared them.

"And now, madam," said he, "I must congratulate you upon your succession to the famed Collingsbrooke diamonds, entailed in a bequest almost a century ago to the female descendants of that direct branch of the house. Are you acquainted with the contents of the will executed by Lady Collingsbrooke, Dowager Countess of Everhampton, your great-grandmother?"

"I am not," Cecil replied. "There was little communication between my father and his family. If he was aware of the contents of the document to which you allude, he never referred to it to my knowledge."

"Briefly, then, this is the story," began the lawyer. "Lady Collingsbrooke was the mother of five children, four sons and a daughter, your grandfather being a younger son. The diamonds were bequeathed to the Lady Sarah to be transmitted to her eldest female child, or, failing such, to the eldest female descendant of the son claiming precedence in birth, who should be so blessed."

"The Lady Sarah died unmarried, and the jewels reverted to Lady Nora, only daughter of the Earl of Everhampton. Of the two remaining brothers of your grandfather, one died a bachelor, the other leaving no child. The Lady Nora married and



The timbers, left unsupported, swayed and creaked dismally, then went down with a crash.

was the mother of several children, male and female, but all died during their childhood. Her brother, the present earl, has no daughter, and Lady Nora's recent decease leaves you the only female descendant of the house, and consequently the diamonds fall to your reversion.

"They are a legacy worthy a representative of that noble line, and I am happy to be instrumental in placing them in your possession. At present they are held by the London firm for whom I am acting, but the only delay will be the necessary time consumed in submitting these proofs of your identity. After that the gems will be immediately forwarded."

"Again let me congratulate you, Mrs. Frampton."

Cecil had followed him closely through this explanation, during which he had dropped the lawyer's technicalities of speech.

"Thank you," she said, quietly. "My good fortune is as agreeable as unexpected."

There was some consultation after that, and then Cecil and her husband left the lawyer's office to be driven back to their hotel.

Meantime we return to Frampton House. Olive was alone with the exception of the servants. She was in her own room trifling over some articles of *bijoutrerie* scattered upon her toilet-table, when, after tapping at the door, Emmy Brown, who did double service as upper parlor-maid and lady's attendant, entered. She was a willing, tidy girl, who had long been in the service of Mr. Frampton, and was much valued by the household.

She was pale and heavy-eyed, and moved listlessly.

"What is the matter, Emmy?" queried Olive, kindly. "You look quite ill."

"It's my head again, Miss Olive. I'm afraid I'm about to have one of my worst spells. If you can spare me, Mrs. Blodgett says she will see that Dolly gets through with the work; I'd like to go home for a couple of days until I am over it. I can't

do much when I've one of my headaches, but I'll come back whenever you like."

Emmy's severe headaches had always been a subject of compassion for Olive, and the required permission was readily granted.

"Certainly, you shall go, Emmy, and do not return until you are entirely well. I will go down this afternoon to see how you are."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Olive; you are very kind," said Emmy, gratefully. "Somehow my mother can always keep down the pain best. She'll be glad to see you at the cottage."

"My only regret will be that it is your affliction will take me there," replied Miss Tremaine. "You need not wait, Emmy; go before the greatest heat of the day."

She did not forget her promise. As it drew near evening she placed a few delicacies in a small basket, and set out on her self-appointed mission.

Mrs. Brown's cottage was just beyond the boundary of Frampton Place, away from the public road, but between the house and the village. It was a pleasant walk through grassy by-lanes, skirting meadows and fields of grain luxuriant in their emerald growth.

She found Emmy suffering acute nervous pain, but the cool quiet of the shaded room, aided by Mrs. Brown's bitter herbs, promised speedier relief than could have been secured at Frampton House.

Olive did not linger long, and returning took a path which for some distance stretched through a thinly wooded tract, and led more directly homeward than the way she had come.

Midway ran a narrow, sluggish stream, which was the outlet of a small lake that went by the name of the Pool. The banks were fringed with osiers, and it was bridged at the narrowest point by a railed footwalk, old and rickety, and little used of late. There was a narrow bridge some distance below, but to cross it would have taken her out of the direct way. The footplank swayed beneath her light weight, but, apprehending no danger, she went confidently forward.

In the midst of the stream had been a miniature pier supporting the frail structure where the lengths of plank joined. This had long given symptoms of decay, and now, as Olive neared it, the insecure pile gave way. The timbers, left unsupported, swayed and creaked dismally, then went down with a crash.

She caught at one of the upright posts which secured the railing, which, fortunately, did not give way. The stream, though not wide, was deep, and with a slimy black mud at the bottom. She was there in the midst of it, clinging to an insecure support, and communication with either shore cut completely off. At best, it was an unenviable position, but relief was at hand.

A young man following the path she had just traversed, came in sight at the instant of the disaster. Comprehending all at a glance, he sprang forward, and throwing aside his coat and boots, dove into the water.

He swam to her refuge-place, reaching her side before she had recovered herself sufficiently to cry out for help.

"Put your hand upon my shoulder," he said. "There, I will steady you! Now trust yourself to me, and we will be ashore in a moment."

With his arm circling her waist, he struck out with the other for the bank, and in a couple of minutes they had the firm earth under their feet.

She turned to him with grateful thanks, but catching a quizzical glimmer in his eyes, and surveying their two dripping figures, laughed merrily over the ludicrous aspect of the *contretemps*.

"Then you are neither frightened nor hurt," he said, quietly resuming his cast-off garments. "I am glad of that."

"You have suffered equal with me," she replied, quickly restraining her mirth. "But for your timely assistance I would not have readily escaped. You must let me make amends for the inconvenience I have caused you, by accompanying me to the house, where you shall be provided with dry garments, and such hospitality as I can offer in the absence of my uncle."

"Thanks! If you allude to Frampton House, that is my destination. I am Richard Holstead."

Olive was surprised. He was very unlike the rough-spoken men she had individualized as comprising the working class; and this encounter had broken down the barriers of formality she would otherwise have interposed between them. She was too well-bred to betray her thoughts as they went together to the house.

She remembered her uncle's injunction, but found that it required no effort to regard Richard Holstead as the equal of the gentlemen with whom she had associated in her own "sphere." She was already beginning to learn that intelligence and refinement are not incompatible with honest labor.

During the time which intervened before Mr. Frampton's return, she accompanied the young architect through the building, explaining the alterations which had been decided upon. He set to work at once, drafting plans and suggesting such changes as his more practical knowledge deemed expedient.

"This part," Olive said, passing by the heavy door which led into the oldest portion of the house, "uncle has decided not to touch. He has too much veneration for the early homestead to pull it down, and I think the same reason pleads as forcibly against its renovation as the fact that the house is amply roomy without it."

"Its existence lends a romantic interest to the place," Dick remarked. "The ivy-covered walls and moss-grown roof form a pleasant feature when viewed from a distance; and, practically, it would be a difficult, as well as expensive, matter to reduce it to our notions of modern comfort."

For the rest, Olive found herself admiring the quick comprehension which decided at a glance the feasibility of the proposed changes, which pointed out the advantages or defects appertaining to them. He possessed the soul of an artist, together with the faculty of utilizing effects which belongs to the practical workman. The combination of the two established a happy medium between beauty without usefulness and *vice versa*.

With the return of Mr. Frampton the actual work began. Half a score of brawny, stout-limbed mechanics piled their tools within the house, embodying in the result of their handiwork the creations of the one master-brain.

Within a fortnight of the same date Victor D'Arno was established at Frampton House. He came as the avowed *protege* of Captain Collingsbrooke in earlier years, and as one who, by an important service rendered to the father, through it possessed a claim to the gratitude of the daughter. It is not to be understood that he intruded upon this assumption.

He had taken quiet lodgings in the village, and made it appear that an accidental meeting with Cecil and her husband first informed him of his proximity to an early associate. The rest Cecil's own tact, and Mr. Frampton's desire to show regard to his wife's friend, accomplished.

It was even with a show of reluctance that D'Arno, yielding to the cordial invitation of the latter, consented to take up his abode in the house at such a time, lest his presence should incommode the family while various portions of the building were undergoing repairs. But the spacious old dwelling, with its wings and projections, left ample room for the accommodation of all, and the leisure of the household was by no means infringed upon by the labor being accomplished beneath the roof.

And in the elegant *personnel* of Mrs. Frampton's friend, neither her husband nor young Holstead recognized the shabby stranger who fell the victim of disaster upon Cecil's marriage day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SLAVE OF THE NEEDLE.

IT WAS growing late in a fervid summer afternoon, but the blinding glare of sunlight, beating back from slate roofs across the way, reflected its sultry heat into the upper room, where a slight, fair girl sat bending over her work.

Changed, indeed, since we saw her last upon the eve of the conflagration, wherein she was supposed to have perished, yet it was Eve Collingsbrooke in the flesh.

She had been rescued from the burning building by one of the courageous men who battled the fire-fiend to the last as it closed in about its human victims. Awakened by the tumult, the crackling of the flames, and the suffocating heat, she had sprung up from her bed to find herself enveloped in a cloud of smoke, which strangled and bewildered her. She made a few vague efforts to reach the door, but failing, staggered back to the couch and fell upon it in a dead faint.

It was a merciful unconsciousness. It spared her the agony of the great peril encompassing her, the groans and shrieks of those perishing near her.

A fireman, penetrating further than any of his fellows, broke into her room and snatched her senseless form from what had threatened to be her last resting-place. The brave fellow almost forfeited his own life as the penalty of his daring; his retreat seemed cut off by the rapid progress of the flames.

But he fought his way through all, desperately. He tottered out into the open air with his helpless burden clasped close in his arms, both terribly burned but not beyond recovery.

Among other nameless ones, Eve had

been conveyed to the hospital. Her injuries were slow to heal, and fever setting in, she had lain for weeks wavering between life and death. Her young, healthy vitality conquered in the end, and she went out in the world alone, friendless, homeless.

Her life lay a desolate path before her who had been always tenderly nurtured. She ascertained beyond doubt that her father had perished on that terrible night, but the bitterness of her grief was broken in upon by the necessity for action which her destitution forced upon her.

Their only income had been a life annuity settled upon her father. This fact had increased his anxiety to see her placed beyond fear of want as Hugh Frampton's wife.

But Eve, separated from this consummation by a dreary lapse of months and the absence of the motive power which had urged her to it—she did not know of that other barrier interposed now—had no inclination to forward the accomplishment of that old understanding by her own effort.

The same intuition which told her that this chain of events had severed the bond existing between them, also caused her to shrink from applying to Hugh Frampton for aid in her extremity.

She believed that Cecil also had perished. Utterly alone and in a land of strangers, unused alike to privation and to exerting her own energies, Eve took up her stand amid the multitude who do battle for the necessities of life, in a great city.

She was skilled in embroidery, and succeeded in obtaining regular work. But her utmost efforts could no more than sustain her beyond the pale of actual want.

The room in which she sat was small, and meagerly stocked with only indispensable articles of furniture. She was thin and pale yet, from long prostration. Her heavy blonde hair had been shorn close, and in its stead now had come a growth glistened and waving about her neck, making her seem more youthful than before, despite the shadows lingering in her eyes and the hollow traceries depicted in her face.

A single cicatrized mark upon her temple, and almost concealed by her waving hair, scarred her face; but upon her throat and wrists, not wholly hidden by the close-fitting dress she wore, were other and plainer evidences of the perils she had passed.

She raised her head wearily but without letting fall her hands with the nearly-finished work. A heavy step toiling up the bare wooden stairway, paused at her door. A tap, answered by her low-voiced "Come in!" was followed by the entrance of the stout, ruddy-faced Irishwoman who was her landlady.

"Mrs. Mulrooney?" said Eve, in some surprise, rising to place a chair.

"Yis, shure it's meself, mem, an' an awful thump it is, too, up them stairs. It's tuk the breath out of me compleatly, it has. How ye stand it comin' up an' down is more than I can say at all."

"It's not from choice that I occupy such a high station," Eve returned, with a faint smile.

"It's the same I said to Norah, shure. Sez I, the young leddy'll not stand in the way of a better offer whin like enough she'll be plazed to take other quarters. An' sez I, it's the use of the spare bed in me own room I'll be beggin' of her to accept till she finds other lodgin's, an' she wilcome to it as the blissid air she brathes."

"It's that, mem, which brought me up to say yez the day, for it's a wantin' of the room at once, the gentleman is; an' sez I, the leddy'll take my bed instid of a warnin' whin she knows of the chance. I mightn't have been so bowld to ax it of yez but for me throuble, an' poor little Patsy that's down with the fever, to say nothin' of hard times an' the rise in mates of late."

From sheer lack of breath Mrs. Mulrooney paused; and Eve, gathering the pith from her flow of words, approached at once to the point.

"You want me to give up my room without the customary warning?"

"It's that, mem. The gentleman is own cousin to me lodger on the next floor, an' for the sake of bein' wid his own kin won't stand for the matter of a quarter extra on the rent. It's the accommodation I'm axin' of yez."

"To be sure. I could keep the apartment only a fortnight after your expressed desire to retain it, and the kindness you have shown me forbids such a return when your interests are better served otherwise. I must accept your offer to share your chamber if you have no vacant apartment suited to my use until I can procure such elsewhere."

"The blessin' of the widdy an' the orphan be wid yez. It's sorry I am to part wid yer like, an' if yez can give me surety of yer sthavin' for good, it's yerself shall kape the room forby the extra quarter an' me lodger's cousin. It's the onsartainty of yer wantin' to sthaye, mem, more'n all the risk."

"I fear that I can not give you that assurance, Mrs. Mulrooney, much as I should like to do so."

Plain and inconvenient as the apartment was, Eve had already more than once been driven to contemplate a removal to a cheaper domicile.

Profuse in her expressions of regret that Eve should be subjected to any inconvenience, and of gratitude for her ready compliance with the request made, the really kind-hearted Irishwoman took her departure.

Eve applied herself with renewed diligence to the work which she had not relinquished even during the presence of her visitor; and for an hour scarcely raised her eyes from the groundwork of fine linen on which her needle had upraised an exquisite design of bud, and vine, and flower. The last stitch was taken while the glare of the declining sunlight yet beat into the little room. Then she rose, and donning hat and veil, took the roll of completed work and went out upon the street.

The sidewalks lay in shadow now, and were thronged by the business population hurrying homeward after the completion of their laboring hours. Eve quickened her steps, taking little note of the thousand expressions reflected in the tide of faces floating past, which once it would have delighted her to dwell upon. So much does participation in the actualities of life take from us our inclination to throw the garb of romance over its rougher phases.

The walk was not a long one, and she entered a bazaar where dainty trimmings hung out their enticing insignia to tempt luxurious feminine tastes. A clerk coming forward greeted her courteously, and receiving the roll from her hand, left her waiting while he disappeared into some obscure recess of the establishment. He returned again shortly, with a similar package not yet secured with wrapping and cord.

"Your work gives entire satisfaction," he said, affably. "So much that Mr. Blair is induced to employ you on a companion-piece, though opposed to his former resolution. The season is so dull that no more embroidery will be given out after this, and it is only on condition that you can complete the work by Saturday that it is wanted. There'll be no difficulty, I hope."

"The pattern is very intricate, and the time short," Eve ventured, her heart sinking at the prospect his words foretold. "Did you say it is the last I shall have?"

"For the present, yes, Miss. Hope to see you on our list again when business is brisker. Mr. Blair mentioned the same, in fact, which is quite a compliment to your skill, I assure you, Miss."

He deftly twined the fabrics he had unrolled into shape again, and looking about him, seized upon a torn newspaper in which to inclose it. Still Eve lingered.

"Can you recommend me to another establishment, meanwhile?" she asked. "It is of the utmost importance that I procure uninterrupted employment."

"Sorry," he returned; "but the fact is, dealers in our line are all overstocked. We'll recommend you willingly, of course; but I'm afraid it will be of no use. I'll manage that you shall see Mr. Blair himself on Saturday, if you wish; maybe he can suggest something."

Thanking the friendly clerk, Eve dropped her veil, and turned away with a despondent heart-ache growing upon her. She could see that the vague hope offered was but the faint of a kindness which shrunk from inflicting an unpleasant conviction in its sharpest form. Wearily she toiled up the long stairways. The late sun cast a dull red glow upon the opposite roofs, and, fatigued as she was, she sat down by the window to begin her task by that remnant of waning light.

The roll of snowy linen lay upon her lap, when a breath of air floating down over the housetops, caught at and fluttered the paper not wholly removed from it. She put her hand down upon the rustling fragment, and her glance following it, rested upon her own name, printed in conspicuous characters.

It was the same advertisement which Mr. Frampton had stumbled across weeks before. Eve devoured it with eager eyes, but its object was no more apparent to her than it had proved to the woman who had usurped her identity.

Yet it came to her a message all the more welcome for being unexpected. It was like a bridge connecting her happy, care-free past with this existence so drearily hopeless, so loveless that it seemed scarcely worthy of the continuous struggle required to sustain it, and stretching beyond into the promise of a brighter future.

The commonplace wording of the paragraph awoke in her a tide of rushing recollections. It carried her back to the home in which her childhood had been passed, with all its associations of tender memories.

It recalled the voyage which had promised to be the prelude to a newer and wider sphere of life; the days loitered away in the erratic wandering which Captain Collingsbrooke had preferred to following the circumscribed routes grown familiar to tourists. Then the sudden blotting out of all that was fair before her; the loss of the single great affection she had ever known; the blind groping with her scarce recognized grief during the time when her physical suffering deadened her sense of mental pain, and after that the realization of utter loneliness, which is the most desolate of all the bitter destinies a young life can know.

She roused herself from the reverie into which she had fallen, to contemplate the new consideration thus thrust upon her. She recognized the difficulties she would be called upon to surmount, before proving the degree in which this summons could affect her.

Unlike the majority of English girls, she was familiar with the geography of her country, and less reliant upon herself, dreaded the solitary journey to New York. She might have written, it is true, but this indefinite promise seemed to resolve itself into something tangible lurking in her.

She drew out her well-worn portemonnaie and quickly observed its contents. There was only the modicum she had received that day for her completed work—only enough to meet her expenses for the week. She clasped her hands in her old way when anything troubled her, and leant her forehead down upon them against the window-sill.

A sensation of pain, unnoticed for a moment, the aggravation of her flesh pressing against the sharp points of a heavy ring she wore, brought to her like a flash the solution of her most pressing difficulty. Her rings, the sole possession she retained which accorded with her former position, opened up the avenue which had seemed closed against her.

Norah came by and by with a request that she should assume the occupancy of the place assigned her; and Eve, gathering up the untouched work which had fallen to the floor, gave some directions regarding the disposition of her few effects, and followed the girl to Mrs. Mulrooney's chamber.

It was a large, neat room, with beds ranged closely along one side, and was the sleeping-apartment of the widow and her five children. Being well ventilated, the prospect was less uninviting than might be supposed.

That evening as she plied her needle by the light of the kerosene lamp which shed its illumination for the divers occupants, she explained to her good-natured landlady the import of the advertisement addressed to her, and the resolution she had taken.

Mrs. Mulrooney entered heartily into the brighter anticipations which Eve had indulged, and, moreover, proffered her services in a most acceptable manner.

She assumed the task of disposing of Eve's rings, and on the following day took them to a jeweler whom she chanced to know. After much haggling she secured a price which, though below their real value, was greater than Eve had hoped to realize.

Eve's task grew less burdensome when it was no longer a work of actual necessity, or perhaps the newly-awakened hope lightened the drudgery. On Saturday she carried back to the store her last piece of work, and received Mr. Blair's assurance that more of its kind was not then attainable. But this fact was not now of vital moment to her.

The Sabbath day she passed quietly. Early in the week—her few requisite preparations occupied but little time in their accomplishment—she took regretful leave of the humble friend she had found in her landlady, and fairly embarked upon her journey.

CHAPTER IX.

GROPPING HER WAY.

The second day after this witnessed Eve's arrival in New York. It was close upon evening, and she was much fatigued, having traveled without stoppages by the way. Her first consideration was to find a respectable hotel where the charges should not exceed her limited means, and refresh herself as best she might before proceeding to investigate the mysterious business which had called her here.

She applied to the hackman to whom she trusted her modest portmanteau, the only baggage with which she had incumbered herself, and he directed her to a private boarding-house kept by a relative of his own. The house was located on a quiet, out-of-the-way street, and was really what it claimed to be, orderly and comfortable.

She was fortunate in securing a back room, the rather remote situation of which proved a drawback to its permanent occupation. The plain, homely aspect of the place, with only so much of convenient adjuncts as was compatible with its character, seemed very inviting to her compared with the bare mode of life she had latterly been compelled to lead.

She ordered a simple supper of rolls and tea, and, despite all sanitary rules, ate it heartily and forthwith retired. Even this violation of the laws of health had not the power to rob her of the deep repose so much needed by her wearied frame. Her sleep was heavy and dreamless, and the morning was well advanced when she awoke.

She felt worn and exhausted still, but conquering her disinclination to move, arose and went down to partake of a substantial and inviting repast. Fortified by steak and omelet, cream-toast and coffee, her languor vanished before thoughts of the exigencies which the day held in store for her.

Returning to her room, she assumed her out-door garments, and then summoned a waiter to make inquiry of the location and best means of reaching No. 17—street.

An hour later she stood within Mr. Chantry's outer office.

A clock upon the wall, whose muffled tick was lost amid the floating sound of city noises, pointed its hands at a quarter to eleven. The clerks at their desks were alternately using ruler and pen with automatic precision. Eve stepped forward, addressing herself to the grave-faced elderly man nearest her.

"Is Mr. Chantry in?"

"Not in, madam," he returned, holding a fresh penful of ink suspended over the blank form before him.

"Will he be here soon, and can I wait for him?"

"Mr. Chantry is out of town for a couple of days, madam. Any business of a general character will be attended to by Mr. Neal."

He inclined his head toward the inner door, which stood ajar. Through the little space Eve could see a rosy-cheeked young fellow thrown carelessly back in one of the office chairs, with slippers feet upon the table, and an unread law tome by his side, evidently taking his ease during the absence of his superior.

"My business is with Mr. Chantry alone."

"Then you will probably find him here at this time day after to-morrow."

Eve turned away, and the clerk resumed his interrupted task without even a glance after her retreating figure.

Two days which she could ill afford to pass there idly lay before her. For the first time since her hurried decision and prompt journey, she questioned the wisdom of the course she had followed. What if, after all, the bubble which had enticed her here should subside into a nonentity? Depressed at the necessity of delay, she took a car and went back to her lodgings.

The boarders there comprised for the most part clerks and shop-girls, varied occasionally by struggling members of the professions who had not yet won either money or fame by their devotion to the chosen branch. These were not yet in to the mid-day meal, and the house lay wrapped in the quietness of the intermediate hours.

Going up the stairway and through the long back corridor, Eve paused and shivered as a succession of anguished moans and mutterings struck upon her ear.

One of the domestics belonging to the house, a girl whose fresh color and unstudied simplicity of manner spoke plainly of rural breeding, came out of a room near by with the tears of a genuine sympathy fresh upon her cheeks.

"What is it?" Eve asked her. "Has there been an accident?"

"O my! it's a sight as would make your heart ache. A bit of a boy that's been took of a sudden with the fever, and him wild as a lunatic already. One minit he's all ago tossing and screaming, and the next he calms down and begs so piteous like for his mother that's hundreds of miles away."

"Poor fellow!" said Eve, pityingly. "Has he no friends in the city?"

"Not one as we know. He's been only a week here. They're a-taking him to the hospital now."

As she spoke, the door of the room opened for the second time, and two men appeared, bearing the sick boy between them. Eve had a glimpse of his flushed, swollen face, and eyes preternaturally bright, as she passed on to her own apartment. The sight of him, so helpless and with the touch of affliction upon him, came like a reproach for her despondency.

The remainder of that day and the following she passed in strict seclusion, and on the morning of the third returned to Mr. Chantry's office. This time she was ushered at once into the inner room and the lawyer's presence. Mr. Neal was standing by the table explaining some written papers which lay before him, his attentive, submissive manner offering strong contrast to his idle assurance upon the former occasion. At a sign from the elder man he withdrew, and the other turned to Eve inquiringly.

"Mr. Chantry?" she asked, less from doubt of his personality than a desire to gain a moment's reprieve in which to arrange her thoughts to the briefest and clearest manner of presenting her mission.

"You inserted an advertisement some weeks ago in the New York papers, making inquiry for the daughter of Edward Collingsbrooke, late of Berkshire, England?"

She produced the paragraph which she had preserved. He glanced at it carelessly and at her with a suspicion of surprise, though his face reflected no shadow of the emotion.

"I did, certainly. May I ask if your visit refers to that?"

"It has brought me a long journey to ascertain its meaning. I am Eve Collingsbrooke."

The lawyer's keen eyes fixed themselves steadily upon her face as he repeated: "You Miss Collingsbrooke?"

"I am the daughter of Edward Collingsbrooke," she asserted.

Mr. Chantry's impassive countenance underwent no change, but his voice had gained an added tinge of dryness as he said: "In that case you are of course furnished with credentials. May I trouble you to produce them?"

"Unfortunately, I have none. If it is not trespassing on your time I can give a satisfactory account of their absence."

"Ah, no doubt! but the relation is wholly unnecessary. If this is the extent of your business with me, madam, we will consider the interview closed. Let me warn you for your own welfare to make no more mistakes regarding your identity such as you have been guilty of this morning. Permit me!"

He rose with a stiff bow, making a motion as if to open the door for her exit.

A wave of indignant color surged over Eve's pale face. She also arose, with a gesture that stayed his hand and impelled him to listen to her words.

"At least I have a right to an explanation of your meaning," she said. "I can not suppose you inserted that advertisement merely for the purpose of subjecting me to insult. There is some mystery here which I do not understand. Will you aid me in its unraveling?"

"If more definite explanation is required, I can readily give it," returned Mr. Chantry. "I have already concluded the business transaction to which this paragraph refers, with the daughter of Captain Collingsbrooke, now the wife of Hugh Frampton, of Frampton."

Eve's gaze reflected her unbounded amazement.

"There has been some unaccountable mistake made," she declared. "I am Eve Collingsbrooke, and I came to the United States in the ship Phoenix, accompanied by my father, as the Personal states. I was the betrothed wife of Hugh Frampton. He was to have joined us at the Breton House, but, upon the night of our arrival, the place was consumed by fire. Poor papa perished in the flames!"

Her voice faltered, her lips paled, and her eyes grew humid at memory of his tragic fate. With an effort she regained her composure, and proceeded:

"I escaped with my life, but so severely injured that weeks passed before I realized my irreparable bereavement. I had no friends in this country. My engagement to Mr. Frampton had been the result of an intimacy existing between himself and my father, and I had never met my betrothed husband. When I found myself alone in the world, I preferred struggling on by my own endeavors to applying to Mr. Frampton either for temporary assistance, or the consummation of the existing engagement."

"Less than a week ago I met with this advertisement, and came here, hoping to derive some good from the vague promise contained in it. I have no knowledge of a namesake; certainly no one claiming my name could have fulfilled the conditions further, will you tell me for what purpose you inserted the paragraph?"

Mr. Chantry was a cautious man, as it be- hooves all of his class to be, but he foresaw that no ill consequences could ensue from an open explanation regarding the bequest of the diamonds. More than this, Eve's evident sincerity convinced him that at least she had full faith in her own version of the story.

She is affected with a species of monomania," he decided to himself. "I heard of a case once where a man who was strictly sane on all other points firmly believed himself the great Caesar, and grew violent when any one attempted to disabuse him of the hallucination. It may prove my quickest way to dispose of her to relate the entire circumstance."

Accordingly, he repeated the story he had related to Cecil and her husband; and was surprised at the accurate knowledge which Eve displayed of the Collingsbrooke genealogy.

"Some weeks ago," he concluded, "Mrs. Frampton presented her claim accompanied by conclusive proofs of her identity. Acting upon these the London firm transmitted the jewels, and two days ago I had the pleasure of delivering them to their present owner. I returned last evening from my trip to Frampton Place."

"It is a mystery to me," Eve said. "Can it be that there is such a thing as a double existence, as some have claimed?"

The lawyer, watching her attentively, leaned forward as her veil fell out of place, leaving her face unshaded from the full light of the open window.

"You are very like Mrs. Frampton," said he. "You are thinner, paler, but the resemblance is such as might exist between twin sisters. I observed it from the first, but not so clearly as now."

Eve's thoughts flashed back to that night at the Breton House when she and Cecil had been reflected side by side in the mirror, and a glimmering of the truth broke upon her.

"Can she have done so?" she asked herself. "Yet, who except Cecil could successfully enact the role?"

Setting aside the lawyer's suspicious regarding herself, she made minute inquiries about Mrs. Frampton and the proofs which had been produced. Afterward she ascertained the distance and line of conveyance to Frampton village.

"No doubt you think me either crazed or an impostor," she said, with a faint smile, as she concluded the interview. "I hope to convince you otherwise ere long, much as appearances seem against me now."

The lawyer bowed constrainedly, more embarrassed than he cared to confess, over the complication presented in this second claim, and declined the fee she proffered him, noting at the time the slender little purse from which it was drawn. He drew a breath of relief when she had really departed.

"Poor thing!" he muttered to himself. "It's hard to think of one so young as the victim of a mental aberration. Strange whim a power such persons have of influencing others to their belief. I would have felt confident of the truth of her assertions but for my absolute knowledge of other facts. I wonder if she is not a relative of those Collingsbrookes?"

Another client appearing diverted him, and the matter was dismissed from his thoughts.

Eve, dwelling upon the revelation which had been made her, grew more than ever convinced in the opinion she had formed.

Some one had usurped her place, and that some one was necessarily Cecil.

She returned to her boarding-house and ordered a frugal repast, for by this time the sum received for her rings was almost exhausted. Afterward she sent for her bill, and settling it, found little over a dollar remaining in her purse.

This she knew was insufficient to pay her fare to Frampton. She removed the change of linen and few traveling conveniences from her portmanteau, doing them up in a close package. She went out upon foot, remembering that at a short distance she had seen the brass balls of a pawn shop.

Here she disposed of the empty portmanteau, and afterward proceeded to the railway depot. Procuring a ticket for Frampton, and ascertaining that the first train for that place did not leave for some hours, she sat down in the crowded waiting-room, feeling the full measure of her loneliness with the flow of human life all about her.

A dreary, apathetic feeling was stealing upon her. There was a dull ache in her brain, and a dry harshness upon her lips. She told herself that this was reaction from the excitement she had experienced; and at last, after a seemingly interminable delay, she found herself aboard the train on her way to Frampton.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 107.)

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"I have listened to you calmly, sir. You have mistaken me. I own that it is very hard to give up such hopes as you have raised. I know that poverty will be doubly bitter, after that momentary glimpse of happiness. But I will not, to gain the world, become the perjured wretch you would make me!"

"It would be no perjury, Mrs. Dorant. It would be merely the termination of a relation with a worthy man, with whom you should never have united your fate."

"Be silent, sir, and leave me! I scorn the temptation you offer!"

"It is temptation, then," muttered the visitor, observing her narrowly. His heart beat when he saw how white and set were her very lips.

"Lewis shall never know it!" sobbed the wife. "Or if he did, he would know that I would not give him up for the wealth of worlds!"

"I leave you for the present," said Marlett. "I will return when you have had time to reflect on my words."

"You need not return, sir; you must not. My husband might see you. For mercy's sake, do not come here again; never! Do not let my husband see you, nor hear what you have said to me!"

"Is she afraid of his urging her to yield?" muttered the man to himself. "Or afraid of his anger? My dear Mrs. Dorant, rest assured that he will learn nothing from me! I shall seek for you only when I come back. I have left my carriage at the inn; I do not mind stopping a day or two."

"I forbid you to return!" exclaimed Madeleine, her eyes flashing, her cheeks aflame. Again the perception of her beauty flashed across the sense of the tempter. She was superb in every phase of emotion!

"I will say no more now. If it is your wish to-morrow, I will continue my journey. Good-day, madam."

"Stay, sir; answer me one question. What motive brought you here, knowing, as you did, that the conditions of the bequest place it beyond my reach? What interest have you in me?"

"None, personally. I never saw you before."

"Have you any interest in the property which I am debarred from inheriting?"

"None, certainly; though I am a kinsman of yours."

"You?"

"A cousin, twice removed, on your uncle's side. That is nothing. He did not leave me a penny. He had confidence enough in me to leave his son in my care. Years of faithful service had earned this charge. I receive nothing more. With the surrender of the estate into the hands of the ultimate legatees, my duties cease, and I must earn my bread elsewhere."

"You will pardon me, I hope, any rudeness," said Madeleine, softened.

"Surely, madam. Permit me now to leave you, and return for your final answer."

"There is no need of returning. My answer must be the same. I am debarred from the inheritance."

"That is as you choose!"

"It is not as I choose!" cried the wife, almost fiercely. "If Lewis and I both wished it, for our child's sake, it could not be! And I would not renounce him, even if he would give me up. You see how impossible it is! I wonder you came here! I wish you had not come! Pray, pray, sir, forgive me, and go away!"

"You will be able to judge more coolly at another time!" were the last words of Marlett, as he went out of the cottage door. He left behind him the traveling-bag he had brought in.

Madeleine was left standing in the room, her hands grasping the back of her seat, her features rigid with agony, her cheeks colorless, her lips drawn apart. It seemed to her a fantastic dream. Wealth and high social position hers by birthright! Her mother had often told her; had often painted her state restored to the splendid home of her kinsman, that kinsman who had wished to make her his daughter; to endow her with his riches! Why had she been told what might have been? Was it not misery enough to live in so poor a hut, to see her husband toiling his life out for the scanty pittance necessary to give bread to his wife and child? Would he really suffer, if relieved of that hard necessity?

Her brain was in a whirl; she clasped her hands across her forehead, and her form swayed to and fro as if motion could relieve the tumult of her thoughts. Then her pent-up tears broke forth like a torrent, and she flung herself despairingly on the floor, wishing that life might end with the grief that oppressed her beyond bearing.

She did not hear the approaching steps of her husband, for the child was asleep in his arms, and he walked softly. He drew the latch of the door, and entered the cottage. Seeing his wife prostrate on the floor, he sat down the little girl and ran to raise her, in wild alarm.

What was his astonishment to see a face wet with tears; convulsed with the sobs that still burst from her bosom!

"Madeleine! my wife! What is this? What has happened?"

She dashed the tears from her eyes, and stood up, in shame at having betrayed herself. The child, suddenly released, was beginning to cry. She darted forward, caught Oriol in her arms, and was about to carry her into the inner room.

"Dearest, you have not answered me! What has happened to disturb you?"

"Nothing, Lewis, I assure you."

"Nothing—and I find you on the floor, weeping, with every sign of distress on your face! You have heard some bad news?"

"No—I have not; pray do not question me further. Let me put the child to bed."

He followed her into the interior room, where she laid down the little girl and spread the covering over her. She looked so pretty in sleep, with her brown ringlets clustering about her blooming cheeks, that the mother stooped to press a long kiss upon them. When she lifted up her head, and met the anxious looks of her husband, she shrank from them for the first time.

He took her arm and drew her out of the chamber.

"You must tell me all, Madeleine," he said.

She averted her face. How could she tell him?

Suddenly he noticed the traveling-bag on the table. Crossing the room, he took it up and read the name.

Madeleine looked at him mournfully.

"He must have left it. I did not observe it before."

"Who must have left it?"

"The gentleman—the traveler—who called here to rest himself an hour since."

"And brought news that has disturbed my darling! Is it not so?"

The wife was silent.

"Madeleine, you must tell me your distress."

"I think I heard the child cry; let me go to her."

"She did not cry; she is asleep. My wife, how have I deserved to lose your confidence?"

"Oh, Lewis! I do not wish to tell you what will distress you, without doing any good!"

"I can share your burden with you."

"And double it in sharing! Leave me to recover from the blow. I do wrong to feel it. Indeed—indeed, it is nothing!"

"Then you do not trust me, Madeleine."

"Can you think so, my husband? Then you shall know all. That stranger brought news of my uncle. He was a rich man; he died some time since, leaving a sickly son to inherit his property; the son is also dead."

"And you are the next heir?"

"My uncle left a will, bequeathing the fortune to me, in the event—"

"Then I must congratulate you, Madeleine. And you seemed so unhappy! Who was this uncle of yours?"

"His name was Clermont; he lived at Broadhurst, in Sussex."

"I have heard you describe the place; a noble estate, is it not?"

"But, oh, Lewis—there is a condition that will prevent our ever coming to the inheritance."

"What condition? Are you required to change your name?"

"That would be nothing; but I can only receive the fortune as the wife of one of my uncle's kinsmen; of some member of the family."

Dorant was silent for some minutes.

At length he said: "And the bearer of this news did not know you were already married?"

"He did," answered the wife. "He said he knew it."

"What did he say to become of the property, if you did not comply with the conditions?"

"It will go out of the family; to some hospital."

"He came, then, to tell you what you had lost by marrying me?"

"He dared to propose that our marriage should be annulled."

Dorant started up and began to pace the room quickly.

"I sent him away, Lewis; I would not listen to him. It is all over; let us think of it no more!"

"I wish I had but seen him!" muttered the husband. "Will he come back for his traveling-bag?"

"You must not see him, Lewis. Promise me that you will not! I will get father to take his bag to the inn in the village. He said he had left his carriage there."

"I should like to see him!" said Dorant, in the same low, unnatural tone.

"It will be of no use; I have given him my answer. We can have nothing to do with the property. I only wish he had not come! Oh, I wish he had not come!"

They heard footsteps on the frozen ground outside. Colonel Duclos had returned.

Madeleine hastily left the room, and Dorant went into the kitchen, where his father was putting coals on the fire for the preparation of the evening meal.

Colonel Duclos came in, shaking from his overcoat the snow that was beginning to fall in fine flakes. He stood before the fire in the little sitting-room, absorbed in thought.

"I know he will not be persuaded to take money," he said, at length, "for giving me his company for those seven miles; so I will take the liberty of leaving it here. Where can I put it? Ah! this drawer!"

He pulled open a drawer of the sideboard, put in a roll of gold, and closed the drawer.

"I shall be at a good distance from here to-morrow when they find this," he muttered, chuckling softly to himself.

The younger Dorant came in, and expressed his pleasure that his friend had got in before the storm. He urged him not to think of going on that night; but the colonel said it was imperative that he should be far on his journey at an early hour the next day. Dorant then asked for the paper the dog had brought in.

"I have it not," Duclos said. "It must be somewhere about the room. I should like, too, to look at the account again."

Lewis took up the traveling-bag. "This must go to the inn," he said, "before I leave the house to-night."

"What is that? A stranger's traveling-bag?" asked the officer.

"He came while we were at the village; stopped to rest, my wife said—and left this on the table."

"It is of fine leather," remarked the soldier. "What is that on the brass plate?"

"Clermont, Broadhurst, Sussex. I have heard that name—I remember now; a rich squire; owned capital horses and hounds! Can he have been here?"

"No; he has been dead some time."

"So I heard; now I recollect. He must have left a magnificent property."

"Was it so large?" asked Dorant, musingly.

"One of the largest owned by any of the gentry in the county. A splendid collection of paintings, too. He must have had taste as well as riches."

"He was rich?" repeated Dorant, gloomily.

"Immensely rich! He leaves a son, I believe, to inherit his estates!"

"I think not!" answered Lewis, still in thought.

"No? then who does the property go to? I never heard of any relations who might come in as heirs! Lucky dogs, if there were any!"

Dorant made no reply. He was nervously searching for the newspaper.

At length he drew open the drawer in the sideboard. The roll caught his eye; he took it up, and the gold fell out. He let the parcel fall, and started back, apparently in horror.

"Ah! he has found it too soon!" muttered the colonel, watching him.

"The man must have given this to Madeleine!" said Dorant, speaking to himself.

"I must see about this!"

He was going into the chamber, when Duclos intercepted him.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"To see what this means," returned the husband, gloomily, pointing to the drawer.

"For heaven's sake, man, what do you suspect?"

"I will not suffer my wife to receive money from a stranger!"

"Nonsense, man; she knows nothing about it."

"She must have taken it from the owner of that traveling-bag!"

"She did not! Come, sit down. If you must know, I put the money in that drawer."

"You—Duclos?"

"I—my good friend. You are going to render me a service to-night, it would have been hard to make you take pay, and it was my fancy to leave a present. I have plenty more; you need not scruple to take it."

"You are kind, Duclos; but—I can not take your money."

"You need it; why should you hesitate?"

"I know it is needed; but—"

"Buy the child something; a new dress or two; there are only ten pounds."

"You must excuse me. I can not take it. I have done nothing to earn so much."

"But you are going to risk your life for me to-night. They say the road is dangerous in such weather, and in the darkness. You will have to come back alone, after leaving me safe at the station where I take the railway."

"Take it back!" said Dorant, holding out the roll.

"I will not. You act foolishly."

"You will offend me, sir, if you do not take it."

Duclos received the money, looking very much surprised at his friend, whose face was white and rigid, while his lips moved convulsively.

"You do not trust an old friend?" he said, reproachfully.

"You must forgive me!" and Dorant wrung his hand. "You do not know what I suffer."

"Suffer?"

"Knowing that my wife is chained to poverty through me!"

"How is that?"

"She is well born; she has relatives who would proudly own her; she might have wealth and station, but for me!" The words were forced out, as it were, by the bitterness of a crushed spirit.

Duclos sighed. "These unequal marriages!" he murmured. "No good ever came of them!"

"But she may give me up—and be happy!" queried the husband, searching the countenance of his companion, as if he would find there a solution of his cruel doubts.

"I doubt if she could be happy. How has she found her relations? Before you were married, she knew nothing of them."

"The man who came here to-day," pointing to the bag, "brought news of her uncle Clermont's and his son's death. The property is hers, if she will refuse to acknowledge me; if she will consent to a divorce—"

"And what does she say?"

"She is very unhappy."

Duclos started up, seized Dorant's hand, and exclaimed: "If she hesitates, my boy, let her go to her rich friends, and come you with me. We will serve together abroad. You will like the life, I warrant you!"

Dorant's face darkened. The iron had entered his very soul with the suspicion that Madeleine's grief was for the loss of wealth. He knew her ambition; her love of adornment and luxury. She was fitted for the high station within her reach but for him. Suppose he should leave her free to seek release from the tie that held her from accepting the dazzling proffer?

He pressed his friend's hand, but said nothing. Just then his father opened the door to announce supper. Madeleine had prepared the meal. Her face was flushed and from exertion, her hair and dress, contrary to her usual careful neatness, had fallen into disorder. She looked none the less lovely; on the contrary, her husband thought he had never seen her half so beautiful, with the troubled expression in her eyes, that sent such a pang to his heart. She condemned for life to such household drudgery? The thought sickened him to the very soul. He could eat nothing.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEED OF DARKNESS.

THREE miles from the bluff, along the wild coast, was a range of cliffs, more precipitous and rugged than those on the ordinary road skirting the sea. The black rocks had been broken into huge fragments by the beating of the wintry surf, and lay piled in confusion at the foot of the cliffs. So gigantic were some of these boulders, that dark caverns were formed where they jammed together, and the water at high-tide rushed through them, bearing a freight of sea-weed and pebbles, which hung on the rocks like the beard of withered age, adding desolation to their grim aspect.

These treacherous dens were traps for the unwary boatman; and many spoils of the sea were hurled into their recesses. Not unfrequently it had happened that the bodies of the drowned, driven from some floating wreck, found a tomb in these ghastly receptacles. Once lodged therein, the waves that lashed the caverns bore speedily away the semblance of humanity, till the scattered bones strewed the beach, one here and there remaining wedged in the rocks.

Not far off was a dangerous quicksand, over which the billows swept when the tide was in, leaving the treacherous waste, at their ebb, as smooth as summer ocean. Nothing sunk in those sands ever reappeared.

It was a frightful spot, always avoided by the smuggling craft that sometimes plied along the coast; for the sailors feared the sands had a mysterious power of sucking in whatever touched their surface, and that a boat scraping them would have little chance of escape, should it be deserted by the tide.

There were several caves and half-ruined cabins along the face of the precipice, just out of reach of the storm-lashed waves. These were well known to smugglers, and a rendezvous among them.

One cavern, a little higher up the rocks than others, was of some extent, and so sheltered by a thick growth of bushes, that, but for the curling of a thin column of smoke, or the glimmer of light outside the den, it could not have been seen.

It was about eleven o'clock at night, and the snow storm had ceased. But the snow lay thick on the rugged boulders and the bare trees that struggled for a foothold among the rocks; and with a hoarse roar, like mocking elfin laughter, the billows flung themselves on the vexed strand. Within sight, if there had been light enough to see it, a crazy old bridge spanned a wide rift, overgrown with weeds and bushes.

By the flare of a torch at the entrance of the cave described, two figures might be seen. One was that of the dark, thick-set man already mentioned in this story by the name of Hugh Rawd. His younger companion, who held the torch and waved it to and fro, had a handsome face, but pallid and hollow from the effects of dissipation.

"I see nothing of the boat," he said, in a low tone.

"What time did you expect her?" asked Hugh.

"Not much before twelve; but she might be along sooner," was the reply.

"A lot of goods stowed here for her, I suppose."

"I'll bet you; the finest you ever saw."

"And you are off to-night for the north coast?"

"Certainly; it is never safe to keep stores here too long. It is but a depot—without a guard but myself."

"She will not come before twelve! Our men will be along before that time. You shall take one of them in the vessel, and set him ashore anywhere on the French coast, when you touch there next time."

"Don't like the risk, comrade. He may split on us."

"Nonsense; you must keep him hooded; he'll see nothing such a dark night."

"Why not send him to keep company with the other?"

"I expect no pay for disposing of him; and I never like to work for nothing."

"I don't see, Hugh, how you can get rid of one without the risk of being brought to book for the other."

"Well, I'll look after the military fellow, then, if you will—"

"Stop, Hugh! You pay me well for helping you; at least you have promised—"

"And the money is sure! I have my hold on Marlett; he is safe to do all he said."

"Exactly; and so will I. But I'll have nothing to do with—You understand? I am not to know any thing about it."

"All right. And on second thoughts, I could not spare the luxury to any one. I have an account to settle with him."

"An account?"

"The fellow belabored me in Antwerp within an inch of my life. I swore to have my revenge, and I mean to do it."

"Good! I like that better than doing for a night traveler for money. After all, there's something shabby in that, mate."

"Put the light inside!" whispered Hugh.

"They are coming!"

"How are you to distinguish them?" returned the other.

"The man in the brown cloak is for me to settle with! I know that old cloak well! I can tell the cut of it where I can not see the color."

The torch was planted inside the cave, and the two men stood outside, listening intently.

The tramp of footsteps, pushing aside the stones in the road and crushing the soft snow, was heard more and more distinctly, with the sound of voices in conversation.

They were passing along the road above, and coming near the old bridge.

The two men standing by the cave looked at each other significantly.

One of them whispered: "Put the light where I can see it from the place."

Then he quitted his companion, and stealthily ascended the precipice by a winding path covered with foliage, which he thrust aside at almost every step. The steps, indeed, were cut in the rocks, and the shrubs had been left for a screen.

He stood by the bridge before the two travelers had come to it.

"I am giddy and sick!" the concealed foe heard one voice say. "What frightful precipices! And the path grows insecure! It is very slippery!"

"Courage! If we are steady of foot, there is no danger," said his companion.

What followed, the listener could not distinctly hear.

"Is there no place where we could rest till the moon rises?" one of the two asked.

"I have plenty of time, if we reach N— by daybreak!"

"There are smugglers' caves somewhere hereabouts; at least one that in old times was used as such," was the reply. "Take you the lantern; I will go and see if I can find the place. If there should be anything there, I may get you some brandy."

"It was a sad oversight," muttered the other, "to neglect such useful provisions for such a walk. You say the road is better further on?"

"Ay, this is the only dangerous spot. We shall be on a wide track in a few moments."

"Then I will rest here, while you see about the brandy."

"Here is the lantern."

"Keep it; I can stay here in the dark. I am on the bridge."

The lantern shot forth feeble rays that penetrated but a short distance. As it was passed from one to another and back, Hugh plainly saw the man in the brown cloak, his intended victim, leaning against the old wooden bridge. His companion, who had the light, sprang quickly away, and began to descend the precipice.

The eager assassin did not pause to reflect that a stranger was not likely to be sufficiently acquainted with the localities to venture on a search for the cave. If such a thought crossed his mind, he recollected that the military man might have been in search of smugglers and so have discovered it. As the sound of his footsteps ceased, he sprang on the figure standing upon the bridge.

There was a quick stab; a brief struggle; another blow, and the victim was pushed off. The crash of the falling body was heard among the bushes growing in the crevices of the rocks.

A faint moan or two came up from the abyss.

The assassin turned and fled down the path by which he had come. His foot slipped in his descent, and he caught hold of a stunted tree to save himself from falling. The tree gave way; the ruffian slid down, striving in vain to grasp the roots and ledges so as to secure his footing. They broke the force of his fall, however, so that he was only scratched and bruised, by the descent that might otherwise have killed him.

With muttered execrations upon the snow that made the path so slippery, the villain gained his feet with difficulty.

He saw the faint glimmer of the torch planted at the mouth of the cave, and crawled toward it, not daring to shout for assistance.

Meanwhile the man who had left his companion on the bridge, had just gained the cave. He entered and was searching for a bottle of brandy in a basket he saw there. It was a basket of provisions. A bottle of wine he found; and putting that in his pocket, he was making his way out, when he saw the dark, shadowy figure not far from the entrance, and heard him call out to some one.

"All right!" was the hoarse, half-whisper-

ed response. "I did for him, and pitched him down off the bridge."

"We must demolish that, and make it appear that he fell," said the accomplice.

"But the knife between his ribs will tell a tale to the contrary."

"Murder!" gasped the listener. He was about to spring out upon the villains, though armed only with the bottle of wine, when he was arrested by the next words that fell on his ear.

"His wife will be jolly for this night's work."

"His wife knows of it, then?"

A WINTER NIGHT.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

There's a sigh in the northern gale,
And a shiver in the trees;
While a sound like a mystic wail
Sweeps over the ponds that freeze.
The stars in their beauty tremble
With the snow's prismatic light,
Like diadems in a temple
On brows of images white.

A silence reigns in the valley,
And the pulse of strife is still;
Not the bogies, that creak and dash
In the night wind, but the soft chill.
While the mountain stream's soft gushing
Is a prisoner in rude hands,
That in its free rushing
Through the fertile meadow lands.

The mountain in grandeur lifteth
A brow of eternal snow,
While the Winter's cold blast drifteth,
In the summer sun to glow.
The pines in spectral numbers
Are leaning as if to spy
Secrets, where the moonlight slumbers,
With a deep, unceasing sigh.

Love's Compensations.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

OUTSIDE, the giddily whirling storm of snow-flakes were hurtling through the air, piling higher and higher their soft emerald mantle on the already whitened earth; and as Monica Ayler parted the crimson-satin curtains of her dressing-room that overlooked the snow-bound park, her lips parted in a joyous smile of mingled anticipation and pride.

She was very lovely, standing in the dead white light of that snowy atmosphere, with the rose-pink curtains casting their glowing, satiny sheen on her face and figure; and Monica Ayler's was a face and a figure that few persons—and especially a man—would be content to look upon. She was very fair, with large, lustrous, jet-black eyes and curling lashes that matched in hue her purple-black, glossy hair. She had always a deep pink flush on her cheeks, and when she parted her full red lips in the smiles that so often displayed the small, pearly teeth, there was a deep, saucy dimple that nestled among the incarnadine tints on her cheek.

She was petite, round as a robin, graceful as a dove, and—in love with Chester Colfax.

It wasn't so much to be wondered at, that he had won her, for he could have won most any of the women who knew him—unless it were Juliet Chase, "the iceberg," whom no man ever yet had been able to win a smile from; whom all men she knew and favored with her acquaintance would have gone to the ends of the earth for, could they journey there to have bought them her love. Time had been, when Chester Colfax had almost won her; when busy tongues had coupled their names in matrimonial connections; and then, in all disdain, in all icy repugnance, Juliet Chase had entirely withdrawn her smiles from Chester Colfax; and he, half because he was piqued, and more because he was not of a very constant disposition, had speedily transferred his attentions to beautiful Monica Ayler; and although she was the last woman to wear her heart on her sleeve, she was easily won by handsome Chester, and was the happiest woman on the face of the earth, that snowy winter morning.

For he had not been to see her for nearly a fortnight, now, and the promise had been that when the first sleighing came, he was to drive up from New York, and take her out in his stylish turn-out.

So that was why Monica's eyes were so resplendent, and the exquisite flush on her cheeks deeper, as she stood between the draping rose-red curtains, in her white cashmere wrapper, with its ermine bands circling her throat and wrists, and reaching from her dimpled chin to her high-arched foot.

"Is it such a blow, then, Monica?"

Harry Craven bent a proud, sympathizing face closer to his cousin's pale, sharp features—features one would scarcely have known for Monica Ayler's, so keen was the agony, so unnatural the white pallor that marked her, stricken-hearted.

Just now, in her cold, limp hands, lay an open note, daintily crested and monogrammed with two large Roman C's, intertwined gracefully.

That letter had just been sent to her, while Cousin Harry Craven was willing away a half hour; while she was waiting in dainty array of jetty velvet and ermine furs, for Chester Colfax and his sleigh.

She had been so brilliant, so beautiful, that Harry Craven felt, away down in his brave, honest heart, what a prize this fair cousin would have been to him. He remembered, half bitterly, how much more he could—ay, and did—love little flush-cheeked Monica, than ever handsome, selfish Chester Colfax could do. But then, Harry Craven, when he saw the shimmer of the opal betrothal ring on the taper finger, was not the man to let her know or dream of all that blazed in his heart.

Now, with that strange, terrible revelation before her eyes, Harry Craven was wondering whether he was most glad or sorry that it had all happened so cruelly. Did he most pity this white-faced, anguish-eyed girl, or congratulate himself that now he was free to woo her if she could be won?

He hardly knew himself, as he leaned his head down beside hers, and asked her in such a tenderly sympathetic way:

"Is it such a blow, Monica?"

And for answer, she had laid her face on the marble stand before her, and silently handed him the letter.

"I can not come to you, to-day, as I promised; and, Monica, I will be plain, if cruel, and tell you I never can come again. You will give me up as unworthy, I know, because I deserve nothing better at your hands; and I in turn, while I will not mock you by asking for forgiveness, will be candid enough to tell you that because Juliet Chase has given her love to me, I dare not play myself false for life, by trying to make you happy when my whole heart is hers. Try to forget me; it is all I ask. C. C."

Harry's cheeks darkened and then paled, as he read the cold, gentlemanly insult—and then, in one gush of impulsive, overwhelming passion, he flung it under his feet, and clasped the pale, quivering figure tightly in his strong arms.

"My Monica! my poor, stricken darling! how could he have done this dastardly thing, and to you—to you whom I would give my life to comfort, to have torn my own Monica, darling! I may be wild, mad, to speak at such a time, but if I only might have what he spurns! if I only might teach you, in

coming years, that one man's love can suffice for another's."

It seemed as though the sound of his own pleading, passionate voice surprised him, as well as Monica, for an almost mysterious silence fell upon them.

Then, lifting a face whose eyes were blazing like unquenchable fires, she laid both her ice-cold hands in his palms.

"Harry, I am not afraid to trust my life with you. I will be yours—if you think I am worthy."

And on the warm June day that the bridal cortege of Chester Colfax and Juliet Chase crossed the threshold of Trinity Church, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Craven were walking down the broad aisle to the traveling coach that awaited them at the door.

"So it is to be the corn-colored moire to-night, Maude? and the diamonds?"

Mrs. Craven was looking with proud, love-fringed eyes at the beautiful girl who stood before the dressing-mirror, deftly arranging, with her own dainty fingers, the fleecy clouds of flossy, yellow silk hair.

"The corn-colored moire and diamonds, mamma—unless you think another toilette more becoming."

It was very like Monica Ayler's voice as it was twenty years ago; and Monica Ayler's only child—hers and her dead Harry's—fair Maude Craven, was quite like what her mother had been years ago.

Mrs. Craven worshiped this daughter of hers; she clothed her in "silk attire," and would have fed her "melted pearls and molten gold" had they been good for her digestion.

As it was, Maude's life was one long sunny day; one exquisite fairy dream, only the brighter and sweeter now, when nineteen, she loved, for the first time.

And so strangely are the warp and woof of life wrought for us mortals by the Fates' hidden fingers, this lover of Maude Craven, to whom she had given all the sweet freshness of the love of nineteen, was—Cyril Colfax, the only son and child of the man who had deliberately trampled on Monica Ayler's heart years and years ago!

It seemed more like a romance than a page out of real life; that Monica's husband was dead, and her fatherless Maude had for a lover the motherless boy of Chester Colfax; for Juliet had died a year or so ago, when Mrs. Craven's widow's weeds were two years old.

Very gradually had the fact become known to Maude's mother, that Maude loved Cyril—handsome Cyril—so very like what his father had been in those never-to-be-forgotten days of yore; and to-night, as she watched peerless Maude array herself to meet this lover, with the same glory in her eyes that Monica remembered must have been in hers once on a time when she waited for—a cool repulse, Mrs. Craven felt how good a thing it would be to stab Cyril Colfax's father, and not allow Maude to be his son's wife.

But, when she saw her star-eyed, beaming, fond darling, how could she waste through her heart's blood to pierce the one of the only man whom, after all he had done, after all she had done, after all twenty years had wrought, was only and still the man to whom her inmost soul owned its allegiance?

Then, as swift, surging memories went over her, bringing back all the anguish and the agony, she suddenly grew wrathful and resolved.

"It is not for Cyril Colfax that you are adorning, Maude? Because, if it is, there must be an end to it all, at once. You can not marry Cyril Colfax."

And turning away her regal head, that she might not see the dumb agony on Maude's suddenly blanched face, Monica Craven wondered, as she walked away, if, in the sight of God, she had not done a wicked thing?

A large, stylish visiting card, bearing a well-known name on its plain, enameled surface—"Chester Colfax."

How Mrs. Craven's heart bounded when the footman handed it to her on the tiny silver salver. It would be the first time for four years that she had seen him—never since he and Juliet started for Europe, from whence he returned alone.

So, with strangely mingled sensations—first frigidity, then overgushing tenderness; now well-veiled indifference, and now, yearning wonderment—Monica swept into her elegant reception-room, and met him, face to face.

He was courteous; she, the perfect hostess; he led her to a chair, and then stood before her.

"I will tell you at once why I came, Mrs. Craven," he said, and his tones thrilled her through and through. "It is to plead the cause of my boy, and your daughter. Mrs. Craven, do not break their hearts, and darken all their bright, young lives because I did you an unpardonable wrong—a wrong that, before Heaven, I have repented of, in sackcloth and ashes; that I would atone for, in humility and proud delight, this very hour, if you would but let me—"

And Monica Craven, with the true womanly charity that forgiveth all things, and beareth all things, went up to Chester Colfax, after those twenty wild years, and laid her hands on his shoulders, with her beautiful eyes glittering with tears.

"Maude shall be Cyril's; and I, Chester—I will be yours—after twenty years."

And she did just right.

Tracked to Death:
OR,
THE LAST SHOT.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

AUTHOR OF "HELLFIRE HAND," "LONE RANGER," "SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER XL.

THE HOME OF THE HUNTED SLAVE.

DEEP in the heart of the cypress swamp, in a spot only approachable by water craft, was the hiding-place of the fugitive slave.

In a lair not much better than that of a hunted beast he had found an asylum, beyond the keen scent of savage dogs and the astute trailing of their inhuman masters. There Nature had provided him with a shelter from the storm; a house, if rude, ready built for him, and strong as if constructed by human hands.

It was inside a tree, still standing and in vigorous growth; a gigantic cypress, buttressed all round the base, and very similar to that under which Charles Clancy had fallen. The heartwood to nothingness, had left a hollow inside—a huge cavernous void, such as may often be observed in a forest of

deciduous cypress, and not infrequently of such dimensions as to be capable of giving shelter to many men, or even horses. I have myself spent nights in such a lodging, sleeping soundly at full stretch, my horse lying alongside of me.

No horse could have reached the hollow tree in which Darke's fugitive slave had taken refuge, and found shelter from that more feared than rain or storm. Man himself could not approach it, except by skiff or canoe—something to make way through water that could not be waded. Even these could not at all times be taken up to the little islet on which the hollow cypress stood. Around it for two hundred yards extended a quagmire of mud, so soft and deep as to make passage by a pedestrian difficult—in places impossible. This, in the season of inundations, was covered with water, and a canoe might cross it. At other times it was impassable, except by eels, snakes or alligators. Still was there a way of traversing this unsteady track for one who knew it—for Jupiter. Nature had here, again, lent her aid to the oppressed fleeing from oppression. In her wrath, spoken by tempest and tornado, she had laid prostrate several trees, whose trunks, lying along the mud and lapping on one another, formed a continuous causeway across the slimy substratum. Where there chanced to be a break, a little human ingenuity, made to look as much as possible like Nature's own work, supplied the connecting link.

It was along this singular causeway the mulatto had carried the insensible form of Charles Clancy; it being at that season of the year when the waters were low, and the mud-bank barred the passage of his dug-out beyond the place where he had secreted it.

The very difficulty of reaching it by such a path rendered doubly safe the slave's asylum. In approaching it his foot made no tell-tale print and left no trace available for the purpose of the cruel pursuers. More than a month had elapsed since his disappearance from Ephraim Darke's plantation. Although suspected of harboring in the swamp—suspected by the sharpest negro-catcher in the settlement, Ephraim Darke's own son—and there, too, zealously sought for, he had continued to baffle all search.

Meanwhile the mulatto had neither starved, nor much suffered—except from solitude. In his domicile, though rude, he had contrived to surround himself with something of comfort. The Spanish moss, hanging from the branches above, could be collected in cartloads. Armfuls were sufficient to furnish a soft couch, on which he could repose himself. For food he was never hard up—never a whole day deficient. If it came to that, he could easily entrap a young alligator, and make a meal of the tenderest part of his tail. It yields a steak, if not equal to the best pork or beef, at least eatable.

But Jupe was not often driven to this diet, too much of a musky flavor. His usual fare was roast pork, now and then broiled chicken, at times a fricassee of coon or a barbecue of possum. Along with these he had bread—corn bread—in the various shapes of "pone," "hoe-cake," and "dodger." And sometimes, too, though rarely, "Virginia biscuit," of the sweetest and whitest flour, might be seen stored upon the shelves he had scooped out against the walls of his tree-cave. Only on very rare occasions had his larder been empty.

Whence came the pork, the broiled chicken, and bread? The coon and possum might be accounted for, these being wild-wood game, which it was possible for him to have captured himself. The other viands were domestic product, and must have come from the plantations.

And they had come from a plantation—that of Ephraim Darke. Had the fugitive slave stolen them? Not likely. Theft such as that would have been too full of risk, even under the stimulus of keen hunger; too dangerous, with Ephraim Darke's sharp snout prowling around the premises. The provisions would have been stolen—some of them were—but not by the runaway himself. Blue Bill had been the thief, as he was also the confederate of his fugitive fellow-slave. Faithfully had the coon-hunter kept the secret of his friend's hiding-place, even from his better half. Phoebe was only so far privy to it, that she knew Jupe was stowed away somewhere, in the swamp or the woods. She knew this by the repeated draughts on her meat-safes, and the extra calls upon her culinary skill. She had no jealous suspicion that the provisions every now and then taken from their scanty store, and carried off by her husband as he went conning, were for Brown Bet. She knew they were for Jupiter, and made no protest.

So effectively had the coon-hunter carried out the trust of friendship, that the runaway had never been in great strait during his sojourn in the swamp. Blue Bill's noted penchant for the chase gave him plausible excuse for prolonged absences from the quarter; while its products, the coon-skins, enabled him to supply the runaway with some of the luxuries as well as necessities of life. At times, under his coat-skirt, might have been discovered a gourd filled with corn-whisky, beside a plug of tobacco, both of which afterward appeared in a corner of the tree-cave. The former, fortunately more than half full, now stood Jupe in good stead. The strong spirit was the very medicine for his wounded guest; and he at once administered it, on finding that the latter still lived.

It was like pouring fresh blood into his depleted veins. It soon revived him, so that he again spoke, and his host again heard the same names muttered as before.

He often heard them afterward more clearly, if not more coherently, pronounced. Often during the days of delirious raving that succeeded, while, with sympathizing heart, he sat by the side of the wounded man, tenderly nursing him.

And he at length nursed him into convalescence. The shot intended as Clancy's death-shot had failed of its intent. The bullet had not broken a rib, and glanced off without entering the lungs. The shock had stunned him; and this, with the copious hemorrhage from a cut artery, had caused fainting, afterward succeeded by fever and delirium.

With unwearied watchfulness his kind host tended and saw him safe through all. And when, at length, Clancy grew strong enough to think and talk of plans for the future, as a reward for his services, the slave received from his lips a promise to be aided by him in escaping from the swamp, as from the bondage that had driven him into it.

Clancy spoke of Texas; of his determination to go thither, and take Jupiter along with him. At the same time, he cautioned the runaway to say naught of his intention to Blue Bill, knowing the latter to be his

sole means of communication with the settlement. This caution was indeed unnecessary, since he had already warned his host against making known the fact of his being still alive. The warning had been so strictly attended to, that even the coon-hunter himself fully believed Clancy to be dead; and had no suspicion that he was all along finding food for him. He only wondered at Jupe having of late become such a gourmand and gourmet, from his not only drawing more amply upon his provision stores, but shown himself more exacting as to their quality.

Clancy had his own reasons for enjoining Jupiter to secrecy. He had received a full account of all that occurred in the settlement, since that unhappy, and to him so near being fatal, day. The false belief in his own death—that, too true, alas! of his mother's—the arrest of Darke—his escape—the departure of the Armstrongs from the place—in short, every thing that had since taken place was now known to him. Every circumstance in detail had been communicated to Jupiter by the coon-hunter, unsuspecting of the ear it was eventually to reach.

One only had been omitted. Strange to say, the very one that might have most comforted Charles Clancy in his distress, given joy to him in his solitude, and perhaps changed, or, at all events, modified his plan of future action. The coon-hunter had said nothing to Jupiter about the letter dropped by Darke. No more had he spoken of the picture.

It may have been forgetfulness. More likely the omission was from want of time, as well as thought. For after the day of the supposed assassination, or rather that succeeding Darke's arrest, a suspicion had entered his father's mind that Blue Bill could, if he liked, throw some light on the subject.

As a consequence, the coon-hunter was for a time under surveillance; and in provisioning his fugitive fellow-slave he had to act with more than the ordinary caution, with less than the usual time allowed him. For this reason, his interviews with Jupiter had been short, their converse carried on in a hurried manner, and on both sides with trembling lips. Hence it was, no doubt, that the story of the intercepted letter remained untold.

Whether for this, or whatever other reason, it was unknown to Charles Clancy on the night when, parting from the swamp edge—whither in his canoe the fugitive slave had conveyed him—he revisited his own deserted home, and stood over the grave of his murdered mother, proclaiming that stern vow of vengeance overheard by the hunter Woodley.

It was months before the belief in Clancy's death received contradiction throughout the settlement; months before the disappearance of his body was explained, and the fact of his still being alive became known to his old neighbors.

Of course Simoon Woolley and Ned Heywood knew all about it from that night, when the former surprised the missing man upon his mother's grave. But these two, for certain reasons, kept the secret to themselves; and it was long before the world at large knew that the man had not been murdered.

CHAPTER XLI.

"ACROSS THE SABINE."

In the days when Texas was an independent Republic, and not, as now, a State of the Federal Union, the phrase "Across the Sabine" was one of peculiar significance. The river so called was the boundary between the Lone Star Republic and that of the United States; as it still is between the present States of Texas and Louisiana.

The significance lay in the fact, that fugitives from States' justice, once over the Sabine, felt themselves safe; extradition laws being somewhat loose in the letter, and still looser in the spirit, when any attempt was made to carry them into execution.

As a consequence, the escaped criminal, after crossing the Sabine, could breathe freely, however compromising the character of his crime. Even the murderer might almost imagine that the weight of guilt was lifted from off his soul as soon as he set foot on its western or Texas bank.

Some twenty-four hours after the Choctaw Chief had witnessed the departure of Mister, or Captain Borlase—which ever he might be—with the half-dozen others who appeared to be his confederates, a party of horsemen, of about the same number, was seen crossing the Sabine toward the Texan side.

The place where they were making passage was not the usual ford taken by travelers—that of the old Spanish military road, between Natchitoches and Nacogdoches—but at a point several miles above the latter; where the stream, at certain seasons, was fordable. This crossing-place was approached through a tract of pine-forest, along a trail little used by travelers; still less by those who entered Texas with an honest intent, or left behind them, in the States, an unblemished reputation.

That the party of horsemen spoken of were neither doing one nor the other, could have been told at a glance. They had no wagons or other wheeled vehicle to lump them the semblance of emigrants; no baggage of any kind to embarrass them on their march. Without it, they might be explorers, land speculators, land surveyors, or hunters. But no. They had not the look of men who belonged to any of these respectable callings; no resemblance to aught either honest or honorable. In all there were nine of them; and among the nine there was not a face that did not speak of the Penitentiary—not one that did not brighten up, and show more cheerful, when the hoofs of their horses struck upon the Texan bank of the Sabine.

When still upon the *terrapin* of Louisiana, they had been riding fast and hard; silent, and with pent-up thoughts, as if pursuers were behind them. On touching Texan soil all seemed to breathe freely; as feeling they had at length reached a haven of safety.

Then, he who appeared to be the leader of the party, reining up his horse, broke silence thus:

"Boys! I reckon we may take a spell o' rest here. We're now on Texan ground, inside the boundary o' the Lone Star State, whar freemen needn't feel afraid. If thar's been any fools followin' us, I guess they'll take good care to keep on t'other side o' the river. Therefor', let's dismount and have a nap under thar shadder o' these trees. After we've done that, we can talk 'bout whar'to be our next move. For my part, I feel as sleepy as a possum. Thar ar' licker o' the Choctaw Chief allers knocks me up for a day or two. This time, our young friend,

Phil Quantrell, here, has given me a double dose. I guess I won't get over it for a week."

It is scarcely necessary to say the speaker was Borlase, or that the men spoken to were his fellow-roysters in the Choctaw Chief, already introduced to the reader. His allusion to the low hostelry of Natchitoches, and the generous drinking companion he had there come across, still seen by his side, were sufficient to identify the party.

To a man, they all made affirmative response. Like himself, they too were fatigued; dead done up by nearly twenty hours in the saddle, to say nothing about the debilitating effects of their debauch, or that they had been riding with their beads upon their shoulders, under the apprehension of a sheriff and posse being behind them.

During the period of their sojourn in Natchitoches, nearly every one of them had committed some crime that rendered him amenable to the laws.

Their object in having paid a visit to the place might have been innocent enough; or, at all events, appeared so, notwithstanding their rough exterior and roystering conduct. At that time Natchitoches was a true frontier town; and almost every day it witnessed an arrival and departure of characters that might well be called "queer," both as to dress and behavior. Among these the guests of the Choctaw Chief would not have attracted particular attention. Like the sailor in port, when paid off and with full pockets—making every effort to deplete them—so is the trapper during his stay at a fort, or frontier town. He does things that seem odd; are odd; to the extreme of eccentricity.

Jim Borlase and his band had done all this in Natchitoches, and something more. Nearly every one of them had been guilty of a deed that endangered his personal liberty.

Their leader alone had kept clear of such entanglements; and it was only to save his confederates he had so hastily decamped from the place.

His visit to Natchitoches had not been made for mere pleasure. It was business that had brought him thither: to concoct a scheme of scoundrelism such as might be supposed unknown among Anglo-American people, and practiced only by those of Latin race, who dwell on the southern side of the Rio Grande.

That he had succeeded in arranging things to his satisfaction might be told from his jovial demeanor, when he again opened converse with his confederates, after they had taken their siesta under the trees.

"Boys!" he said, calling them around him, "we've got a big thing now, that 'll beat horse-ropin' all to shucks. Most o' ye, I reckon, know what I mean; 'ceptin', perhaps, our young friends here, who've just joined us."

The speaker looked toward Phil Quantrell, alias Dick Darke, and another man of about the same age, passing under the assumed name of Walsh; but whom Darke, in whispers, addressed as Harkness.

After resting his glance upon the two for an instant, Borlase continued:

"I'll take charge o' tellin' them in good time, an' can answer for their standin' by us in the bizness. Thar's fifty thousand dollars c'ar cash at the bottom of it, besides sundries in the clothin' an' trinket line, that 'll get us a welcome eyther 'mong the Comanches or yellor-bellies t'other side the Grand. Thar's some petticoats, too, the which we can sell or keep, 'cordin' as we may feel the fancy."

A diabolical grin, intended for a humorous smile, passed over the features of the brigand as he made this course but significant allusion.

"The question now is," he continued, "whether we'd best wait till this nice assortment o' property gets conveyed to the place intended for its destination, or whether we oughter make a try to pick it up on the way thar. What say ye, fellers? Let every man speak his mind on the subject; then I'll give you mine."

"You're sure o' whar' they're goin' capt'n'?" asked one of the band of freebooters, who appeared to understand something about the proprietorship of the booty described. "You know the place?"

"Bet'n'r'n I know the spot, we're now standin' on. Ye needn't let that trouble ye. An' most all o' ye know it yourselves. As good luck has it, 'tain't over twenty mile from our old stampin' groun' o' last year. I needn't tell any o' ye about whar' thet is. Thar, if we let 'em alone, every thin' air sure to be lodged 'tithin less'n a month from now. Thar we'll find the specie, stock, trinkets, an' other fixin's, not forgettin' the petticoats—sure as eggs is eggs. To some among ye it may appear only a question o' time and patience. In Jim Borlase's opinion, it's somethin' more."

"But wh'y, capt'n? Why should we wait till they get all the way to the place you speak of? Are you quite certain they're bound for it?"

These questions were put simultaneously, and by several voices.

"Boys! Jim Borlase ain't no jackass, is he? I reckon you'll acknowledge that?"

"We do."

"Well, I'll answer all you've asked, in a lump. First place, I am sure o' the destination. I didn't leave Natchitoches, spite the way we war hurried off, till I got the bear-in's of this bizness. As I've told you, we'll find the whole plunder safe out thar—safe as if we'd ourselves conveyed it. Now, as to our bein' patient and waitin' till it arrives, thar's somethin' more to be said. It's just a question whether we *could* capter it on the way. Thar's only nine o' us, all counted—nine good and dependable men, it's true. But this emigration party ain't of the ordinary kind. Thar's a hul colony goin' to start out along w' old Arlstrom an' thar French Creole, as stumps up the cash and intends marryin' one o' his daughters. Ha! ha! ha! He'll be smart, will Frenchy, if he ever gets the knot tied. If he do, Jim Borlase won't any more call himself your captain. Never mind about that matter. What I want to say now is, the nine o' us ain't strong enough to attack this emigratin' party—that is, with a sartinty of succeedin'. We might manage, havin' a run of good luck; but we might get rubbed out by the luck goin' against us. The darned Mississippian planter, broken down though he be, he's seen campaignin' times w' old Hickory's grit in him, and ain't likely to go to sleep 'thout keepin' one o' his eyes open. Besides, he's engaged a big crowd to go along with him—some o' them as I know ugly customers in a skirmish. I tell ye, boys, there'd be no chance for us to touch them on the way. We'd only make a darned mess of it; lose our opportunity; and like enough get our necks into

the loop-end of a laryette. Tharfor, to conclude, say I, let's get on ahead of them; gather our fellers as we go further south. I know o' six now sportin' themselves in San Antonio. When we have enough together, then let's look out for Monsheer Looney Dupre, and the fifty thousand shiners he has got by the sale o' his Louisiana plantation. I'll give a tolerable good divide; and among the colonizers, as they war callin' themselves when we left Nakotosh, I reckon well o' us find a partner apiece. For our young friend here, Mr. Quantrell, I know thar's a bit o' dimity in that crowd he's willin' to follow, wherever it may lead—if need be, to the end of eternity."

Without waiting for Quantrell's rejoinder to this coarse sally, the brigand continued:

"Now, comrades, what say you? Hadn't we better first go straight on to San Antonio? After that, to the place where we are to pick up the fifty thousand shiners."

"For San Antonio first!" answered his comrades, in chorus; "then for the fifty thousand shiners!"

CHAPTER XLII.

IN SEARCH OF THE ASSASSIN.

About three weeks after Borlase and his brigands had crossed the Sabine, continuing on for the south-western settlements of Texas, a second party might have been seen traveling along the same trail through the forests of Louisiana—their faces set toward the same fording place.

In number they were less than half that composing the band of Borlase. In all, there were only four of them—three on horseback, the fourth bestriding a mule.

The three horsemen were white; the mule-rider a mulatto.

The latter rode a little behind; the distance, as also a certain air of deference—to say nothing of his complexion—showing him to be a slave.

Still further rearward, and seemingly careful to keep beyond kicking reach of the hybrid's heels, trotted a dog—a deerhound.

The reader is already acquainted with the men comprising this second party, as also with the dog that accompanied it. The three white men were, Charles Clancy, Simeon Woodley, and Ned Heywood. He with the tawny skin was Jupiter, Ephraim Darke's absconded slave. The dog was Clancy's; the same he had with him when shot down by Richard Darke.

Having accomplished the crossing of the river, they made halt on the Texan side. Their movements showed caution, with some signs of uneasiness; as if they, too, were troubled with an apprehension of being pursued. But it was unlike that betrayed by Borlase and his band—the reason being altogether different. None of the white men had need to fear for himself. Their uneasiness was about the mulatto; a fugitive slave whom they were assisting in his escape from slavery, by taking him along with them to the far free frontierland where he would be beyond reach of the most enterprising negro-catcher.

For this reason, and it alone, were they entering Texas by a route described as rarely taken by the honest traveler.

Just as Borlase and his ruffians, on reaching the Texan side, sought relaxation under the shadow of the trees, so did they. Dismounting on the very same spot, and having similarly secured their animals, they sat down for a spell of rest, but not to sleep. They, too, while staying at Natchitoches, had been guests of the Choctaw Chief, for reasons that may be easily understood. Their plans required privacy; Clancy insisting upon it. To insure success in carrying out his scheme of vengeance, it was needful—or at all events prudent!—he should still be deemed dead. Besides, there was Jupiter to be thought of; and the fugitive slave's freedom would not have continued long had he been paraded conspicuously in the streets of Natchitoches, or seen at any hotel patronized by planters.

Economy might also have influenced them in their choice of a stopping-place. In passing through Natchitoches twice before, Clancy had not felt this need, and had stayed at the principal hotel. Now, things were different, and the few dollars left to him required skillful manipulation. For his traveling companions, Woodley and Heywood, the Choctaw Chief was the very hostility to which they would have instinctively directed their steps even had they been entire strangers to the place. But Woodley had been there before.

Considering the scheme that now knit these three men together—the pursuit of Richard Darke—they could not have touched upon a spot better calculated to put them on his traces. During the twenty-four hours of their stay at the respectable tavern they were enabled to possess themselves of most of the information needed for further prosecuting their search.

As chance would have it, Johnny, the bar-keeper, of doubtful nationality, had been insulted by Borlase just as the latter was leaving. Whether Hibernian or not, he wielded a tongue free as that of any Irishman. This, further loosened by the rancor that remained, was wagged close to the ear of Simeon Woodley—who chanced to be an old favorite—until the hunter was fully informed of all that had taken place under the roof of the Choctaw Chief in connection with Borlase and his band. What had occurred outside the hostility everybody in Natchitoches knew. The grand colonizing scheme of Colonel Armstrong in company with the young planter Dupre; its organization, and departure for Texas about a week before, had been the events of the time—just then ceasing to be talked of in the hotels, taverns, restaurants, and streets.

Simeon Woodley was a man of secretive habit—tenaciously retentive of any thing he might himself discover, or have in trust communicated to him. There is proof of this in his way of managing the search for Clancy's body, and the mode of arresting the suspected murderer—both done under his direction.

Therefore, most of the information he was able to collect during their sojourn in Natchitoches he had kept from his fellow-travelers, until that hour when he and they dismounted from their horses on the Texan side of the Sabine.

Then, as they sat together on the trunk of a fallen tree, smoking their pipes, after a refection of corn-bread and cold boiled bacon, he unburdened himself of the secrets he had drawn from the Hibernian bar-keeper.

The facts thus disclosed, along with what followed, throwing new light upon the subject of our story—as also on the trail the man-hunters were pursuing—call for a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A REPENTANT SINNER.

"FELLERS!" said Simeon Woodley, addressing his speech to his two traveling companions of white complexion, the mulatto still keeping respectfully apart, "we're now on a spot whar, 'bout three weeks ago, sot, or stud, two o' the durndest rascals to be found eyther in the States or Texas. You know one o' 'em, Ned Heywood, but not the t'other. Charley Clancy hev akwaintance w' both, an' a ugly recollections o' them inter the bargain. Thar names ar Jim Borlase an' Dick Darke."

At mention of the names Clancy did not start, nor exhibit any surprise. In common with the other two, he had already heard of Darke having been seen in Natchitoches, and along with Borlase at the Choctaw Chief. Their hasty departure, with the unsuccessful pursuit of a sheriff and posse, were events still talked of in that town. So far was he informed, and congratulated himself on what he had learnt. It told him he was going in the right direction to make discovery of the man who had murdered his mother.

He was even glad at the sheriff's party having failed. He wanted to make the capture himself, and hoped nothing would interfere to prevent him from fulfilling the stern, sacred oath he had sworn over that grassless grave.

Though not exhibiting any surprise at the mention of Darke's name, Woodley's statement in connection with it visibly interested him.

"Here! You think they've been here?" he said, scarce waiting for the hunter to conclude his speech.

"In sure o' it. From what that fox Johnny told me, they must 'a' tuk this trail. An' as they had to make quick tracks arter leavin' Nakotosh, they'd be tired on gettin' thus fur, an' good as sart'in to lay up a bit. Look! thar's the ashes o' thar fire, whar I s'pose they cooked somethin'. Thar hain't been a critter crossed the river since the big rain, else we'd 'a' see'd hoss-tracks along the trail. They started jest the day afore the rain, an' thar 'ere fire hez been put out by it. Ye kin tell by the way them chunks show only half consumed. Yis, by the Eternal! Round the breeze o' them sticks has sot six, seven, eight, nine, or maybe ten, o' the most preeshus scoundrels as ever made crosstin' o' the Sabine; an' thar's sayin' a goodish deal. Two o' them I kin sw'ar to bein' that, an' I reckon a third. The rest may be counted the same from thar kump'ny, that kump'ny bein' Jim Borlase."

"Who is the third you speak of, Simeon?" asked Clancy.

"Him as let Dick Darke out o' the jail—Joe Harkness. Johnny's descripthun o' the man wan't very clear, as he didn't put up at the Chief. He was only thar one' or twic' w' the others. I know 'twar Harkness, for all that. It's bound to 'a' be him. Arter what he did, whar else w'd he be likely to go—cep'tin' along w' Darke? A poor, weak-witted eeddyot he ar; an' if ole Eph g'n him any money—which a coorse he must 'a' dud—Jim Borlase's lot I'll soon ease him o' it."

For a short interval the conversation was suspended; the three who took part in it separately reflecting on what was before them. Then Woodley, after taking a pull from the whisky-bask, with which Clancy had presented him, resumed speech in the interrogative.

"Now, boys, what's to be our nex' move? That's the question."

The others refrained from making answer. They trusted to the questioner's intelligence to direct them.

He understood their complimentary silence, and continued:

"In my openyun, our best plan will be to go straight on to whar Kurnel Armstrong intends plantin' his sticks. I know the place most as well as the public squar' o' Natchez. This chile intends joinin' the ole kurnel, anyhow; an' so do you, Ned Heywood. As for you, Charley Clancy, we know whar you want to go, an' the game ye intend trackin' up. Wal, if you'll put trust in what Simeon Woodley say, he sez this: Ye'll find thar game somewhar in the neighborhood o' Helen Armstrong; nigh to her as it may dar' venture. Whar thar's a deer, you're putty sart'in to find a buck clost by—specially whar the doe ar a sleek, proud beauty such as she."

The hunter's speech had an inflammatory effect upon Clancy. He sprung up from the log, and strode over the ground, with a wild look and strangely excited air. He seemed impatient to get back into the saddle.

His comrades made no attempt to restrain him. They had rested and refreshed themselves. There was no reason for remaining any longer on the ground; and they were all ready to resume their journey.

Rising simultaneously, each unhitched his horse, and stood by the stirrup, taking in the slack of their bridles reins.

Before they could mount, the deer-hound gave tongue, on hearing hoof-strokes; and soon after a horseman appeared, making approach through the trees.

Apparently undaunted, he came on toward the camping-ground. But when near enough to have a fair view of the faces of those occupying it, he suddenly reined up and showed signs of retreating, as though he had recognized among the four men one he had reason to fear and flee from.

If so, he was too late to escape or even attempt it. Before he could turn his horse a rifle was leveled, its barrel bearing straight upon his body; while a voice sounded threateningly in his ear, in a clear tone pronouncing the words:

"Keep your ground, Harkness! If you ride back, I'll put a bullet through you—sure as my name is Clancy."

The threat was sufficient. Harkness—for it was he—ceased tugging upon his bridle-rein, and permitted his horse to stand still.

Then, at a second command from Woodley, accompanied by a similar menace, he urged his animal into motion, and came on to the place occupied by the bivouackers.

In two minutes more he was in their midst, dismounted; and on his knees begging for mercy.

His story was soon told, and told without much reservation. The man who had been convicted at Richard Darke's escape from the Mississippi jail, and made money by the connivance, was now more than repentant for this dereliction of duty. A poor, weak-witted fellow, as Simeon Woodley had described him, he had not only been bullied by Borlase's band, but stripped of his ill-gotten gains. Still more, he had been beaten, and otherwise so roughly handled that he was too glad to get clear of their company. At the first chance he had stolen away from their camp, while his fellow-ruffians were asleep, and was now returning

along the same trail they had taken through Texas. He was on his way back to the States, with not much left him, except a sorrowful heart.

His captors soon discovered that, along with his sorrow, there was a strong commingling of spite against his late associates; against Darke, in particular, who had proved ungrateful for the service done him. All this did Harkness communicate to them, and something besides.

That something drove Charles Clancy well-nigh frenzied, and produced something of a similar effect upon his traveling companions.

After hearing it, all sprung instantly to their saddles, and spurred off along the trail into Texas; Harkness, as he had been commanded, following at their horses' heels. This he did without daring to disobey; trotting after, in company with the hound, seemingly less cur than himself.

Clancy, the leader of the party, had no fear of his falling back. That rifle, whose barrel had been already borne upon him, could be again brought to the level in an instant of time.

The thought of this held Harkness as secure as if a trail-rope attached him to the tail of Clancy's horse.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 97.)

The Red Mazeppa:

OR, THE MADMAN OF THE PLAINS.

A STRANGE STORY OF THE TEXAN FRONTIER!

[THE RIGHT OF DRAMATIZATION RESERVED.]

BY ALBERT W. ALKEN.
AUTHOR OF "OVERLAND KIT," "WOLF DEMON," "ACE OF SPADES," "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE STRANGER.

The morning sun was pouring its bright beams full upon the prairie, drying the dew-drops that hung like liquid pearls on the blades of grass and on the gay colored flowers.

Afar off on the prairie, close to where the Segre silver-ribboned the green wilderness, rode the proud and beautiful Mexican girl, Giralda.

She was mounted on a cream-colored mustang of rare beauty, that loped along with a motion as easy as that of a Yankee rocking-chair.

Behind her, three miles to the south, the hacienda of Bandera loomed up against the sky. Surrounded by a circle of green, the mansion seemed like an outpost of civilization, and so in truth it was, for the town of Dhanis was two miles further south.

Giralda had allowed the reins to fall listlessly upon the arching neck of the mustang, and the beast took its way where it pleased.

Giralda's eyes were bent thoughtfully upon the ground; she heeded not which way the mustang galloped; north or south, east or west, it was all one to her.

The scarlet lips trembled apart; a single word escaped from them—a name—"Gilbert!"

The dainty beauty was day-dreaming of her lover.

'Twas but the night before that he had held her in his arms and pressed such kisses upon her lips as she ne'er had felt before; caresses that told her how happy she would be were she his forever and forever.

How sweet is the strange, incomprehensible passion that men call love, when youth's warm and joyous blood is leaping lightly in our veins!

Each little incident of the momentous interview of the preceding night, each loving word, each fond caress, was fresh now in the young girl's mind.

The pace of the mustang slackened into a walk; he missed the accustomed pressure of his mistress's hand upon the bridle-rein.

Still mused Giralda, deep in the abstraction of her own thoughts.

The sound of a horse's hoofs suddenly roused the maiden from her day-dream.

Raising her eyes, she beheld a horseman approaching from the north. He was quite near to her, and she saw that he was a Mexican, and that the soft surface of the prairie had denuded the sound of his mustang's hoofs.

The new-comer was a young and handsome fellow—a half-breed, apparently, to judge from his color, his coal-black hair and eyes. He was dressed roughly, after the fashion of a herdsman, and bore a sorry-looking mustang, which in color resembled the tawny prairie-soil beneath its feet.

The stranger raised his hat with true Mexican courtesy as he approached, and then brought his horse to a standstill.

Giralda's steed had halted of its own accord upon the approach of the stranger.

"Good-morning, senorita," said the half-breed, speaking in a deep and not unmusical voice, which seemed strangely familiar to Giralda's ears, although at the moment she could not remember where or when she had heard it before.

"Good-morning, senor," Giralda replied, returning his salutation, her dark eyes fixed in wonder upon the face of the stranger; for, upon looking at the man, the impression came upon her that she had seen him before, or, if not him, some one to whom he bore a most striking resemblance.

"Is yonder hacienda Bandera's?" the stranger asked, pointing to the south to where the circle of green nestled by the bank of the river.

"Yes, senor," Giralda replied, her eyes still gazing intently upon the face of the horseman.

The longer she looked the more familiar his face grew; and yet she was almost sure that she had never seen him before. She could not understand the singular interest which the stranger excited in her breast.

"Senorita, if I am not wrong, you are the daughter of Senor Bandera?"

"Yes, senor," Giralda replied.

"Will I find the senor at home this morning?"

With a simple inclination of the head, Giralda made answer.

"Pardon the question, but will the senorita ride further north?" the stranger asked.

"Such is my intention."

"You had best not; the Comanches are abroad, and report says that they are on the war-path."

"I have little fear; my horse is swift, but I will heed your warning, senor, and thank you for it."

The stranger spurred up his horse and

wended his way south, taking leave of Giralda with a profound bow.

The Mexican girl gazed after him with knitted brows. Vainly she questioned why the face and voice of the horseman should excite such a strange interest in her breast.

Suddenly a thought flashed across her mind.

"It is my father that he resembles!" she cried, in wonder.

And she spoke the truth; the stranger, although a half-breed—half Indian, half Mexican—bore a most decided likeness to Ponce de Bandera.

"It is very strange," Giralda muttered, as she urged the mustang into a gentle gallop; but gradually the thoughts excited by the stranger's face and voice faded from her mind, and in their place came again the dream of love.

Anticipation is sometimes almost as sweet as reality.

As Giralda rode up the river, the horseman rode down, heading directly for Bandera's hacienda.

"How beautiful she is!" the horseman muttered, as he rode onward, "and how like she is to some one that I have seen before! Her face carries me back to my childhood's days. I do not understand it." And the horseman's forehead was wrinkled by the lines of thought.

At the gate of the hacienda the stranger halted. A group of herdsman were gathered before the door, preparing for the prairie.

"Is Senor Bandera at home?" asked the horseman of the herdsman, removing his hat in salutation.

"Yonder comes the senor," one of the men replied.

And almost with the word, Bandera stepped from the portal.

"Health be with you, senor," said the stranger, dismounting from his horse and bowing lowly; "do you want a herdsman on your estate?"

The voice of the stranger affected the father as it had affected the daughter.

Bandera gazed earnestly in the face of the applicant; the expression upon his countenance was one of profound astonishment.

"A herdsman?" he said, mechanically.

"Yes, senor; I can ride like the wind, and throw a lasso with any man from here to the Gulf," replied the horseman, confidently.

"What is your name?" asked Bandera, suddenly.

"I can't tell you that very well."

"No?" asked Bandera, in astonishment.

"Not the name which really belongs to me. I was found on the prairie when an infant, and know not who or what my parents were, but the people who brought me up called me Juan," the stranger said.

Bandera had listened attentively, and his cold, keen eyes were fixed intently on the face of the horseman.

"I think I can find something for you to do," Bandera said, slowly. "Go, send Pedro to me," he continued, turning to one of the herdsman. The man departed.

"You are about twenty-two years old?"

Bandera said, again addressing the stranger.

"Yes," he replied.

"Are you never knew your parents?"

"Never, senor."

"It is strange," Bandera muttered, half to himself and half aloud.

Pedro, who was chief of the herdsman, came through the gate.

"This young man wishes employment as a herdsman," Bandera said; "arrange with him as to pay. I think that he will suit me."

Then Bandera re-entered the hacienda, evidently deep in thought.

He did not take long for Pedro and the stranger to come to terms; so, within ten minutes, the horseman, Juan, was formally engaged as a herdsman on the estate of Bandera.

After settling terms with the new-comer, Pedro sauntered back to the portal and leaned carelessly against the gate.

A peculiar expression was on his face as he watched the stranger, who had fallen into a conversation with some of the herdsman.

One of the men, an old weather-beaten Mexican, approached Pedro and noticed that he was watching the new man.

"Voto! you have seen it also, eh?" he said.

"Seen what?" asked Pedro, affecting astonishment.

"The wonderful likeness that this fellow bears to the senor."

"He is like him," Pedro said, slowly.

"Did the senor have a first wife who was an Indian girl?" the herdsman asked, with a meaning laugh.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BEWARE!

The warm summer sun was sinking slowly in the west. The little plaza of Dhanis was full of life. The heat of the torrid sun gone; the inhabitants had sallied forth from their dark adobe walls, and in little groups conversed together, enjoying the balmy breeze, laden with the perfume of the prairie flowers, which blew ever from the north.

The gay uniforms of the Mexican troops—for Dhanis boasted a garrison, composed of a single company, some fifty men in all—made brilliant the little groups of sober-habited citizens.

The gay senoritas listened archly to the compliments of the dashing sons of Mars.

The staid and solid men discussed the prospects of trade and the victories of commerce.

All was peace and rest.

The golden sunlight bathed the little town with its mellow beams.

Then, suddenly, into the little square bounded a sturdy charger, bearing on its back a strange and uncouth rider, clad in a garb of skins.

With wonder in their eyes, citizen and soldier, parent and child, gazed alike upon the strange and incomprehensible man.

The rider was he, who, in his wild way, declared himself to be The Sword-of-Gideon, the Avenger of the Lord.

It was the Madman of the Plains.

In the center of the little square the Madman halted. He reined in his horse so violently as to almost throw the beast backward upon his haunches.

Wildly he waved his arms in the air.

"Oh, men of Dhanis, awake!" he cried, in tones which pealed forth like a trumpet's blast; "death knocks at your doors; heed his warning ye must, or die the death which all must die when the last hour come. The steel is bright; soon it will be red—weep crimson tears; the blood of the innocent—"

of the virgin maid, the tender child, the aged father, the weeping mother, will stain the blade of the red prairie wolf. Rouse ye from your slott! Gird on your armor for the fight! The Comanche is abroad; the red braves are on the war-path; and soon they will sweep down upon Dhanis, their arrows will darken the sun; like the whirlwind they come bearing death and desolation with them!"

The faces of the listeners whitened as they heard the terrible warning.

The fond mother clasped her child tighter to her breast; the maiden clung to her lover in fear, while the strong men of war grasped their sabers and glared around them as if they expected to see the painted and moccasin Comanche warriors spring upon them, even from the earth.

Don Estevan, captain of the Fourth regiment of the line, and commandant of the Presidios of Dhanis, was the first to recover from the general stupor produced by the thrilling announcement of the Madman.

The commandant drew near to the strange being.

"Pardon the question, senor," he said; "but from whom did you gain your information that the red chiefs contemplated an attack upon our town?"

"From the Lord of battles!" cried the Madman, in reply, a wild glare in his eyes.

Despite his firm nerves and well-tryed courage, the Mexican officer retreated a step. There was something unnatural—uneasily about the stranger.

"From the Lord of battles?" asked the Mexican, in wonder.

"Yea!" cried the Madman, in a strange frenzy. "Listen! As I lay sleeping upon my rocky bed within the canyon center, I heard a strange sound unlike the roar of the river where it plunges down the gloomy rocks forming the cañon; unlike the hoot of the night-birds—my sentinels from coming danger, or the howl of the gray wolf who treads the prairie and keeps watch and ward for me. Then the light broke in upon my eyes and I saw clearly; like the prophet in the wilderness I saw the vision of the future. The darkness of the canyon was lighted up by the fires of heaven, and the thunder-pool, the artillery of the Lord, rolled across the sky. I was lifted from my dark bed and borne on the bosom of the blast through the curtain of the night. I saw the red demons arming for the fight. A thousand warriors follow the lead of the White Mustang, and they ride for Dhanis. They leave behind them a river of blood; the scalp-locks hide their deer-skin robes. The flames of the burning houses frighten the stars from the skies. Prepare, oh, men of Dhanis, for blood and slaughter cometh even on the wings of the night!"

"How soon may we expect the attack?" asked the commandant, anxiously; he gave full credence to the words of the strange being; there was something in his manner that forbade doubt.

"When the clouds gather in the sky, beware of the coming storm!" replied the maniac. "The lightning strikes not without warning. The Mexican moon will soon rise; ere its hours fill, the lance of the Comanche will be reddened with Mexican blood."

"Can you tell the point of the attack?" questioned Don Estevan.

"Let your eye sweep to the north," said the strange being, bending over in his saddle and whispering in the ear of the officer.

The Mustang was meditating on the words of his companion.

"But will she go with me?" he asked, suddenly. "How can I ask this girl to forsake home, friends, all, for me, an utter stranger? The thought is madness."

"Do you think that the old Don would give you the gal if you went up bold as a sheep an' asked for her?"

"No, I am almost certain that he would not. At the last fandango there was something in his eyes which revealed to me that he was not pleased with the attention I was paying to the girl."

"Natal! You're neither kith nor kin to these Greasers. He looks upon you as a sort of devil, 'cept hoofs an' tail. It's kinder rough to ask a gal to quit, pull up stake an' travel without the consent of the old man, but it's human nature for the she-critters to do it. I reckon if I loved a gal an' hankered arter her like a hungry bear for a persimmon-tree, that I'd be mighty apt to take her if she'd vanouse the ranch with me."

"I will speak to Giralda and ascertain what her feelings are in regard to the matter," Gilbert said.

The two then entered the house.

Hardly had they sat down within the room, when a low knock sounded on the door.

"Jerusalem!" cried Crockett, in a whisper; "that sounds like a feminine's knuckles. I wonder of that ain't some Greaser gal struck arter me?" and Crockett grinned comically at the Mustang, rising at the same time and opening the door.

A peon girl, with the ever-common serape wrapped around her, stood on the threshold. From the serape a pair of merry black eyes peeped out.

"The señor Vance?" the girl said, hesitatingly.

"Walk right in, marm!" exclaimed Crockett, throwing the door wide open as he spoke. "That's the man."

The girl looked at Crockett as she entered the room, then at the Mustang, and hesitated.

Crockett guessed at once from the girl's manner that she wished to speak to Gilbert alone.

"Sit out, eh?" he said, in a tone of question. "Reckon I will! I alters take a hint quicker'n lightning," and Crockett backed out into the corral at the rear of the house, closing the door after him.

The girl drew a note from the folds of the serape and extended it to Gilbert.

The young man guessed at once from whom the missive came.

The note was brief and traced in a woman's delicate hand. It read as follows:

"I will be by the river, north of my father's hacienda, at nine to-night. Come if you love me."

The signature was wanting, but the Mustang guessed the cause.

"My mistress did not dare to sign it for fear that my errand to you might be suspected, and in case it was found on me I was to say that I had written it to Diego, the keeper of the wine-shop. The writing is mine, senior, but my mistress dictated the words."

"It was a wise precaution," Gilbert said.

"North of the hacienda?"

"Yes, senior; there is a group of three cactuses growing together close to the river's bank, just where the stream bends to the west. If the senior will make a circle on the prairie and avoid the hacienda as he comes up the river, he will not be apt to be seen."

"I shall remember; tell your mistress that I will most surely come."

The girl smiled, went to the door, opened it, but paused on the threshold.

"Will the other senior come too?" she asked, innocently.

Gilbert could not forbear a half-smile at the question.

"Yes," he replied.

"He can keep watch while you talk to my mistress," she said, with a cunning glint of the eyes, and then closed the door behind her.

"Come in, Crockett!" Gilbert exclaimed.

The hunter re-entered the room.

Gilbert told of the appointment to meet the fair Mexican girl, and requested Crockett's company, never hinting of the significant speech of the pretty waiting-maid.

Crockett readily acceded, not dreaming of the trap which the Mustang had set for him.

A mile or so to the north of the hacienda of Bandera, two men rode side by side along the river's bank, deeply engaged in conversation.

"One was Ponce de Bandera in person; the other, the chief of the White Indians, Michael Dago."

"And you finished him, then?" Bandera questioned.

Dago had just joined him, and the iron-willed Mexican spoke of the reckless adventurer who called himself Lope, the Panther.

"Yes; and a perfect demon he was, too," the bandit replied. "I thought that we should have an easy job in dispatching him when he once got down into the well, but I soon discovered that he could hit us better firing up, than we could hit him, firing down."

"But at last you finished him?" Bandera questioned, impatiently.

"Yes, we trampled the stones down upon his head, killed, buried and raised a monument to him all at the same time," and the ruffian chuckled, ferociously.

"I have another task ready for you."

"I hope no more such jobs as this last one," Dago said. "The demon shot away the tip of my ear almost at the first fire. I haven't seen death so near for many a long day; an inch or two the other way and I should have had no more use for golden ounces."

"This is easier; it is to put the American out of the way."

"Oh, yes, I remember. How can we get at him, and when?"

"To-night."

"So soon?"

"Yes; the Mustang has made an appointment to-night. The place of meeting I do not know, but I can easily discover it."

"How?"

"By tracking the person whom the American goes to meet."

"A woman in the case, eh?"

"Yes."

"They always play the devil with us men," said the bandit, coarsely.

"A message was sent to the American to-day. A poor girl of my household bore it. I suspected her errand, happening to see her leave the hacienda and take the road leading to Dhanis. I saw that there was a chance

to entrain this North American without the trouble of providing a lure, so I sent one of the men that I could trust—not to follow the girl, for she is a quick-witted wench, and would have detected the watch at once—but to tell a certain lover of the girl, one Diego, who keeps the wine-shop, that his flame had gone to Dhanis to seek a rival. This put him at once on the scent. He followed the girl and tracked her to the house of the American in the village, then back again to the hacienda. Thus I discovered what I wish to learn. I will have a close watch kept upon the person whom he comes to meet. You with others will lie in wait. When the American returns to Dhanis, attack and rid me of him."

"Why not attack him during the interview?"

"No, no!" cried Bandera, quickly; "the night promises to be a dark one; you might in the gloom injure one whose life is more precious to me than even my own. Rather than a single hair of her head should be harmed I would see the Mustang escape."

"You're right; a bullet has no respect for a person, and knows no difference between friend or foe."

"The night will soon be here," Bandera said, with a glance upward at the murky sky above; the sun had sunk beneath the line of the horizon. "You know the herdsman's cottage, twenty rods or so above the hacienda on the right?"

"Yes."

"Find shelter there with your men, till the time for action comes. I will give you due notice."

"Depend upon me!" Dago replied.

The two parted, the bandit going to the north, Bandera to the south.

The coming gloom seemed like a mantle to hide a dark and bloody deed.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 102.)

The Chief's Pledge.

BY C. D. CLARK.

A YOUNG husband and wife stood together in the doorway of their cabin, the wife holding in her arms a beautiful little girl, something more than a year old. The faces of both were downcast, and their eyes were fixed earnestly upon the smiling face of the child, as she put up her little hands to her father.

"Husband," said the wife, in pleading accent, "can I give her up, while I love her so?"

"We have given a sacred promise," replied the man, in a broken voice. "I am a poor man, but I have never broken my word."

"But the child, our darling Jenny," sobbed his wife. "Here will she live, among the wild savages, brought up in ignorance to hate us and our race. Let us take her, and by to some other land, where the anger of the chief can not reach us."

"You do not give me the counsel which the wife of James Arnold should give to her husband," replied the other, sternly.

"The sun is going down, and at the hour of sunset the chief will be here to claim his pledge, and we must give her up to him."

"It must be done, my husband, but, oh, how can I—how can I do it?"

"Jenny shall not remain a captive among the Indians. I will find a way to rescue her," replied Arnold.

At this moment the sun, in a blaze of glory, sank behind the western hills. The yellow beams were fading out from rock, tree, and river, when the figure of an Indian appeared emerging from the woods, and advancing at a rapid pace. He was a man of stalwart frame, with a face seamed by wounds which he had received in battle.

He wore the rude dress of the Mohawks, buck-skin leggings fringed with the hair of the enemies who had fallen by his hand, with beaded moccasins, and a blanket bedizened with beads and red cords. A knife and hatchet were slung at his side, and he carried at his back the traditional weapons of his race, the long bow and arrows. He advanced at a quick pace, and his eye kindled as he saw the couple waiting for him in the doorway.

"It is Marattah," murmured Sarah Arnold. "He has come for my child."

The Indian stood before them, looking at them keenly, and noting the agony expressed in the face of the woman and her husband.

"See," said the chief, in the Mohawk tongue, laying his finger impressively upon the arm of Arnold. "Three springs ago you were a prisoner in the hands of the Mohawks, who do not love the white men. Your squaw was with you, and you pined for your home, and your squaw would have died in the wigwams of the Mohawks. Is this true?"

"It is true," said the other, with a sigh.

"Good; my brother knows how to remember. Marattah was a chief in his tribe. He saw that the white squaw would die if she could not return to her people, and he said: 'The Mohawks will not give up their prisoners for nothing. Let the white man and his squaw put their hands upon their Holy Book and promise that their first child shall be given to the Mohawks, and they shall return to their people and Marattah will be their friend.'"

"I promised it—God help me," said Arnold. "Look you, chief, I have had some portion of happiness and I can afford to die. Let the child live with its mother, and take me back to the lodges of the Mohawks to be judged according to their law."

"No," cried Marattah, fiercely. "It is not good which the white man speaks. Either let the white squaw go with you to the Mohawks or give me the child. A true man keeps the oath which he has sworn."

Sarah Arnold put her child in the arms of her husband and threw herself at the feet of the Indian, clasping his knees, and looking up, frantically, into his face. He looked down at her with stern indifference, and signed to her husband to remove her.

"The white squaw is wicked," he thundered. "She would make her words a lie, and break her oath given to Marattah. Say whether I am to take the child or not."

"She is yours, chief," said Arnold. "But, remember, if you harm her, if a hair of her head is injured, I will call you to a dear account."

The chief nodded quietly and held out his hands for the child, who laughed and reached up for the feathers which danced in the head-dress of the Indian, whose grim face relaxed.

"She shall be a daughter of the Mohawks and the wife of a brave, and Marattah will be the friend of the white man, because he knows how to keep his word," he said.

"Oh, do not go yet, chief. Stay with us to-night, and let my darling sleep on my bosom for one night more. It will be for the last time."

"No," replied Marattah; "when the sun rises it will be as hard to part as now. The path is before me, my canoe waits upon the river, and Marattah will go."

But Sarah caught the child to her bosom and kissed her again and again with frantic eagerness, her tears dropping fast upon the sweet, young face. Arnold again took the child from her arms, kissed the rosebud lips, gave her to the chief, and gave the signal for him to depart, as he received the fitting form of his wife upon his strong arm.

The chief wrapped little Jenny in the folds of his blanket and departed. Upon the edge of the woods he turned and saw the bereaved couple standing in the same attitude, the head of the unhappy mother pressed against her husband's breast. He held up the child, so that they could see her for the last time, plunged into the forest, and they saw him no more.

A year had passed, and a canoe was floating upon the tranquil waters of the Mohawk, not far from what was afterward Fort Stanwix. It contained two white men, one of them Arnold, and the other a powerful man in a rough hunting garb, his face embrowned by exposure to the sun and wind for many a year. Both were heavily armed, and there was a look of stern determination upon their faces.

"We must land soon, Fralick," said Arnold, as his paddle swept the water lightly.

"Are we not getting too near the village?"

"You leave that to me, Arnold," replied the man called Fralick, one of the best scouts upon that border. "If I know any thing, I know Injuns. Steady; set her in to that little cove."

A single stroke of the paddle sent the canoe round, and another brought her into a little sheltered cove, screened by overhanging bushes.

"Now, see here," said the scout. "It was a foolish thing, in the first place, for you to give the little gal to that fox, Marattah, no matter what promise you made. But you didn't promise not to get her out of his hands if you would, and I'm the boy to do the job. Hush, for your life!"

They drew the canoe closer under the bushes, and waited with bated breath, and soon saw that they had not gained a shelter a moment too soon, for a large canoe, containing eight warriors, shot suddenly into view, headed up the river. In the stern, erect and stately, they saw the towering form of Marattah, the chief. The grating of Arnold's teeth could be heard by the scout, and he laid his hand upon the arm of his companion, and felt him trembling from head to foot. The canoe shot by, and the sound of paddles grew fainter and fainter in the distance.

"You've got to be mighty keener old chap," muttered Fralick, "or the first thing you know, the fat will be all in the fire. I know you ain't in love with him; but for all that you must keep quiet, or back you go, and I do the work alone."

"He has my child in his clutches," hissed Arnold. "You are not a father, man, or you could not speak so coldly."

"I know all that; but you must keep cool. The Injuns are all about us, and if we are to succeed, only caution will do the work."

"I am warned," said Arnold. "You shall have no reason to complain of me."

Night came, dark and gloomy. The Mohawk village slept, and the wind sighed mournfully through the deep arches of the woods around, and waved the curtains of the wigwams. In the darkness, two figures stole through the village, and disappeared behind the wigwam of the chief, which stood in the middle of the village. From this tent issued the fretful voice of a child, and a low cooing song, such as the Indian women sing to their children. An hour passed, and this sound ceased, and all was still within the wigwam.

Let us enter. A torch was thrust into the ground, and burned dimly, and upon a pile of skins in one corner, an Indian woman slept, with a child upon her bosom, a child with golden, curling hair, which never grew upon the head of an Indian babe. This was Jennie Arnold, the lost daughter, who had been given in pledge to Marattah, the chief.

Upon the walls of the wigwam hung various weapons, a quiver, a bow, and several knives and hatchets. Marattah himself was nowhere to be seen. At this moment the keen edge of a knife passed through the thin wall of the wigwam, a corner was pushed aside, and the face of a man appeared looking in. It was that of Fralick, the scout. He peered cautiously about the wigwam, and satisfied himself that, except the woman and child, no one was in the place, and then cautiously entered through the slit he had made, and began to crawl toward the sleeping woman.

She awoke from a deep sleep, and a broad palm laid upon her mouth, and a knife raised threateningly above her, and she understood that the slightest movement would be her destruction. Arnold now entered, and the woman was quietly gagged and bound, and covered by a robe in such a way that she seemed to be asleep.

"The child, the child!" whispered Fralick. "Take her, and let us be gone."

The father caught his child to his bosom unthinkingly, and the little one uttered a sharp cry of pain and fear, and an oath sprung to the lips of Fralick; a guttural sound startled them, and Marattah stood in the doorway. He saw and recognized Arnold, and understood his errand, and sprung at him with a tiger-like leap. But the burly form of Fralick interposed, and the two locked in a fierce grapple.

"Away with you, Arnold!" cried the scout. "Leave this critter to me."

Each had drawn his knife, and the wrist of Marattah fell into the broad palm of Fralick, while Marattah clung to and in-cumbered the knife hand of his adversary so that he could not strike. There was a confused struggle, until Fralick got his right hand free, and not wishing to kill the chief, darted out that terrible hand, and grasped him by the throat with so fell a clasp that his eyes almost started from their sockets. In vain he struggled for liberty, but he could not shake off those iron fingers, and at last he sunk gasping at the feet of his enemy, just as a crowd of painted warriors rushed into the wigwam. Fralick uttered a defiant cry, and, bursting through the side of the wigwam, was off like the wind, with half a dozen painted demons yelling at his heels.

In the meantime Arnold gained the canoe and placed his precious burden in the bow. He had hardly done so when there came the rush of feet, and he sprung up, a pistol in each hand, and shouted:

"Fralick!"

"All right, my son!" gasped Fralick, as he took his place in the canoe. "Off we go, and the devil take all Mohawks, say I."

Their pathway was beset by dangers and difficulties, but they cleared them all, and reached the fort in safety, and the rescued child was placed in her mother's arms. The "Chief's Pledge" grew up a beautiful woman, and her strange adventure is still talked of among her descendants in the Mohawk valley.

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THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

I languish for the good old times
Of which the poets sing,
When friendship was as true as truth—
And frogs two bits a string.

Those good old times of long ago,
How dear they are and sweet!
When man upon his honor stood
As oft as on his feet.

When noble, manly principles
Shone out upon the age,
When people walked in virtue's ways,
Or rode upon a stage.

When party malice, private hate,
Had never shown their blight,
Ere factions had o'erturned the State,
Or corns began to bite.

When peace was plenty in the land,
And mothers-in-law were scarce,
Ere Hope had taken to the mist,
Or some men took to verse.

When you could grasp your neighbor's hand
And find that it was warm,
And when a woman's heart was true,
As also was her form.

When scandal never walked abroad,
And words of praise were meant,
When man dwelt in content and peace,
Although without a cent.

When promises could be believed,
And clarity was strong,
Ere kindly words had grown so short,
Or sermons grown so long.

When pleasure was as pure as day,
And bodes were all unknown,
When any friend would loan a hand,
And often hand a loan.

I've searched through all chronologies,
And through the Almanac,
To find just when those good times were,
And think they're quite far back.

Indeed, if I were asked their date,
I'd whisper, quite forlorn,
They had about three hundred years
Ere any one was born.

Fairy Story.

The White Serpent.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.

AFTER Mozerl had smoked the hide of the great white serpent, quiet reigned in Dunnower for a while; but it was not long before a new trouble came upon the people.

From the carcass of the dead serpent there soon began to arise an most unpleasant and noxious odor, which covered and pervaded the whole realm, and was even so impetuous as to force its way into the palace. The odor was so very bad, and so very strong, that the people could no longer attend to their business; nobody got rich except those who sold perfumes, and one fellow who made a fortune by inventing a combined respirator and machine for holding the nose.

To add to the distress, the people fell sick. A terrible epidemic raged, which carried them off by scores, and there was no stopping it. The king trembled on his throne, for fear that his people would all die, that he would never more be able to collect any taxes, and—last, but not least—that he himself might be seized with the malady.

In this extremity he sent for all the physicians of the realm, and commanded them, on pain of banishment or death, to cure the people and destroy the disease.

They went at work, as they had been working for some time, only much harder than before, with pills, potions, leeches, blisters, cathartics, tonics, and what not. The result was, that the supply of drugs in Dunnower was entirely exhausted, nobody durst bring any more to the island, and the plague raged more fiercely than ever. The physicians with one accord banished themselves from the island, fearing that other penalty with which they had been threatened.

Notwithstanding the departure of the physicians, the disease continued to rage with great violence, and the king was so terribly frightened, that he sent for his treasurer, and commanded him to issue a proclamation, offering a large reward to whoever would discover a means of stopping the plague.

The treasurer shook his head mournfully, and replied that there was no more money in the treasury.

"No more money in the treasury!" exclaimed the astonished king. "What does this mean?"

The treasurer explained that two heavy rewards had lately been paid, and that the people, on account of the troubles in the realm, had been unable to pay any taxes. As a consequence, the treasury was entirely empty.

"Offer a fourth part of my kingdom," groaned the wretched king.

The proclamation was accordingly made, and who should at once come up to answer it but Mozerl, the gipsy. The king was glad enough to see him, as he now had a strong belief in Mozerl, and he began to feel better at once. He caused his counselors and wise men to be summoned into the great hall, where he placed Mozerl in the midst of them, and demanded to know his plan for stopping the plague.

"I advise," began Mozerl, looking very wise and solemn.

All leaned forward to listen, and the king put his hand to his ear, that he might hear the better.

"I advise—that you bury—"

"A little louder," implored the king.

"I advise—that you bury—the body—"

The silence in the hall was such that you might have heard a cambric needle drop.

"I advise—that you bury—the body—of the serpent."

"The very thing!" Who would ever have thought of it! exclaimed the king, and all the courtiers fairly roared their applause.

This measure was at once taken, the noxious odor vanished, and the cause of the disease being removed, the disease soon disappeared.

Marvelous as this circumstance may seem, similar incidents have been known to happen, outside the Kingdom of Dunnower.

The king, when Mozerl was about to leave the council hall, asked him if he would take his fourth of the kingdom, then and there.

"I am willing to wait a while," replied Mozerl. "I don't think it will run away."

The plague disappeared only to give place to another evil.

The carcass of the great white serpent had so long lain above ground, that a carrion crow, happening to pass over the island, (there were no such birds in Dunnower) both smelt it and saw it. He hastened away at once, collected legions of his friends and relatives, and brought them to Dunnower to feast. When they arrived, the carcass had

disappeared, and they flew all over the island in great, horrid flocks, darkening the air and shutting out the sun.

Disappointed of their prey, they fought among themselves, and their rotting bodies were scattered in all parts of the island. A flock of them flew into the palace, one sunny day when the windows were all open, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the courtiers and servants could keep them from eating up the old king.

Greatly troubled in mind and body, the king sent for Mozerl, and offered him another fourth part of his kingdom if he would rid the island of this new pest. Mozerl promised to do so, and at once set at work to fulfill his promise.

He constructed an immense raft, and on this he placed the carcasses of a hundred oxen, which he had caused to be killed and flayed. He kept the raft at the shore, in the hot sunshine, until a very unwholesome odor began to arise from the bodies of the oxen, and until the foul birds began to hover over the spot. Then he towed it off to a point where the current would carry it far out to sea, and set it adrift. It floated away, and the birds followed it in a mass, until nothing could be seen of them, but a black cloud on the horizon, and even that at last disappeared.

"What a wonderful man is this!" thought the king. "I begin to believe that he ought to be King of Dunnower, instead of me."

"Will you have your half of the kingdom now?" he asked.

"You may give me the title now," replied Mozerl; "but I am not quite ready to take possession."

The people of Dunnower, perceiving that many of their number were dead, and that the remainder were poverty-stricken

POSTSCRIPT.—There is no "moral" to this tale, of course, but this much may be said at the conclusion: Have you never noticed that where some harmless and pleasant belief, no matter how fanciful or imaginary, is removed from the mind, it is likely that its place will be occupied by some real, unwholesome and hurtful evil, of thought, if not of action?

Camp-Fire Yarns.

'Lige Huseton's Gal.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

"WHEN 'Lige Huseton kem back to his cabin that night, or what the cabin on't war, he saw on'y a lot uv burnin' logs an' the like, w' blood smeared about over a'-most ev'ry thing in re'ch, an' not a livin' soul to tell who had been doin' the deviltry. 'Twur hard on 'Lige, fur besides the ole 'oman he had the sweetest an' purtiest bit uv a gal on ther border, a leetle four-year-ole, an' smart as a steel cat-trap."

"Then thar wur 'Lige's brother, Ben, an' his boy, an' the tew hands, et leasewise thar hed been, but they warn't now, six in all, an' ev'ry sinner uv 'em gone under."

"Some bones, an' the like, found in the ashes arter the heap had done burnin', showed 'Lige what the imps hed done w' ther victims. S'arch es he would, an' he took the next day fur it, he couldn't find no sign ther showed whar enny uv 'em had been took off as prisoners."

"It kem purty nigh to killin' 'Lige, but he clomb over it, an' then sot to work to hunt

"It so kem about that 'Lige an' me rode together that night, an' uv course, he begin talkin' 'bout that leetle gal uv his'n, an' he went on at sech a rate, that I sw'ar I couldn't hardly keep from sniffin' same as he did."

"'Rube,' sez he, ridin' clost alongside, 'I'm a-goin' ter see my child, to-night.'"

"I sw'ar he e'ena most took my breath, he did. Hyar he'd been lookin' arter the gal fur thirteen year, an' never onc't even gettin' on cold trail, an' yet he ups an' tells me he ar' a-goin' to see her to-night."

"Look a-hyar, 'Lige,' sed I, savage-like. 'None uv ther kind uv talk ef you please. How ther tarnation ar' yur goin' to see yur gal?'"

"I dunno, Rube,' sez he, sorrowful-like, 'but somethin' in hyar tole me I would, an' I will.'"

"I hopes yer may,' says I, 'bout half-mad at him fur goin' mad, es I thought, an' then I drapped the conversation, es the feller sez."

"By daylight we sighted ther settlement, an' in less'n five minits we charged through it, an' into the red-skins on t'other side, whar they lay into the timmer an' long grass, waitin' fur a chance."

"Yur see, lad, they waited a leetle too long, an' give us time to git up."

"Ther fount wur a tough 'un, fur ther odds war somethin' like four or five to our one, ag'in' us, but we war too much fur 'em, an' arter they had lost more'n half ther warriors, they busted, an' lit out fur better quarters."

"We had drew the imps purty nigh ten mile from the village, an' whar they finally broke war among the cliffs an' foot-hills uv the range further south."

"Arter the fight wur over, 'Lige an' me war ridin' back, when jess es we war pass-

been fightin', an' ketched a bullet in his top-knot."

"But how came the girl away 'out there?'"

"Lordy, lad, the imps trade pris'ners all over the kentry, when they're afeard thar'll be a row kicked up over 'em, an' I reckon the Shawnees sent her out, an' traded her off."

Short Stories from History.

Curiosities of Science.—Democritus, who maintained that the sun and the moon are bodies no larger than they appear to us to be, supposed correctly, though very inconsistently, that the spots on the face of the moon arise from the inequalities of the surface, and from the shadows of the more elevated parts projected on the plains. Every one knows how conformable this is to the discoveries since made by the telescope.

Plutarch, whose ideas were incumbered with fewer absurdities than most of the ancient philosophers, considers the velocity of the moon's motion as the cause which prevents that body from falling to the earth, just as the motion of a stone in a sling prevents it from falling to the ground—a comparison which clearly implied the notion of centrifugal force.

It appears clearly from Herodotus, that the ancients possessed a knowledge of the power of attracting lightning with pointed instruments made of iron. He informs us that the Thracians disarmed heaven of its thunderbolts by discharging arrows into the air; and the Hyperboreans by darting into the clouds pikes headed with pieces of sharp-pointed iron. Pliny speaks of a process by which Persenna caused fire from the heavens to fall upon a monster which ravaged the country. He mentions also, that Numa Pompilius and Tullius Hostilius practiced certain mysterious rites to call down the fire from heaven. What these mysterious rites were, it is not worth inquiring; the simple fact which was concealed under them is sufficiently manifest. Tullius, because he omitted some prescribed ceremonies, is said to have been himself struck with the thunder.

For a long time the authority of Aristotle was hardly inferior in the schools to that of the Scriptures, and in some universities it was supported by statutes, requiring the teachers to promise, upon oath, that in their public lectures they would follow no other guide. The renunciation in a great part of Europe of theological opinions, long consecrated by time, could not fail to encourage, on all other subjects, a congenial spirit of innovation. Luther, at the same time that he lost his veneration for his mother church, equally lost all veneration for the Stagyrte, of whom he speaks in various parts of his writings with rather unbecoming asperity and contempt. In one passage he asserts that the study of Aristotle is wholly useless, not only in theology, but in natural philosophy. "What does it contribute," he asks, "to the knowledge of things, to trifle and cavil in language conceived and prescribed by Aristotle, concerning matter, form, motion, and time?" In that delectable work, "Colloquia Mensalia," we are told that "he abhorred the schoolmen, and called them sophistical locusts, caterpillars, frogs, and lice." An opinion nearly similar was entertained by Calvin, and the example of these two founders of new sects would probably have been followed by consequences still greater and more immediate, among their followers, if their fellow-laborer in the Christian vineyard, Melancthon, had not given the sanction of his name to the doctrines of the Peripatetic school.

Aristotle relates, in his "Meteorology," that the fishermen who cast their nets in the Pontine Lake used to carry in close vessels boiled water, for the purpose of sprinkling the reeds, that these might quickly freeze together, and cease to disturb the fish by their rustling noise. The expulsion of air from water during the progress of congelation was afterward fully proved by Mariotte, one of the earliest members of the French Academy of Sciences. If two wine-glasses filled, the one with water from the well, and the other with water recently boiled, be exposed to the frost, the ice of the latter will seem almost uniformly pellucid, while the ice of the former will appear charged with small air-bubbles, crowding toward the center of the mass to which they are drawn by the advance of the congelation.

The knowledge of gunpowder, or of some substance of equivalent effect, is undoubtedly of very remote antiquity. In a preface to the Code of Gentoo laws, published in 1776, it is asserted, on good grounds, to have been known, time out of memory, to the inhabitants of Hindostan. Marcus Græcæus, who is supposed to have lived about the beginning of the ninth century, mentions specifically two kinds of fireworks; the composition which he prescribes for both of which is, two pounds of charcoal, one pound of sulphur, and six pounds of saltpeter, well powdered and mixed together in a stone mortar. The reader need not be told that this was, in other words, nothing else than gunpowder.

Julius Capitolinus, in his "Life of the Roman Emperor Pertinax," relates that Pertinax, to find money for a donation to the soldiers of the Praetorian guard, sold off, by nine days' auction, the sumptuous dresses, furniture, and curiosities of art, with which Commodus had filled the palace. In an inventory of the things sold at the auction, we find the following article: "Carriages, which had contrivances to measure the distances over which they were driven, and to count the hours spent in the journey." It is manifest from this that the Romans possessed all the advantages of the chariot way-wiser, generally supposed to have been first invented by some members of the Royal Society, about the year 1602.

That the ancients were by no means ignorant of many of the leading facts of physical science, these paragraphs show.



Tracked to Death—Chapter XXXVIII.

up a new place whar he could begin it all over agin—I means his clarin's an' cabin, fur he couldn't never git t'other things put back. They war gone fur good an' all."

"Where did this occur, Rube?" I asked, addressing our old friend, Rube Langly, for it was he who was telling the story.

"Up in Kaintuck, on the Little Beech fork," he replied. "They wur about the last Injuns in the State, an' sum time arterwards, 'Lige kem out hyar, or on the north-ard uv hyar, an' opened up his ranch. Fur two or three year he got on fast rate, then ther Comanch' burnt him out, an' sot him all afoot ag'in. He never whimpered, but went out further yit, an' squatted into a leetle wally, an' knocked up another shanty."

"Hyar they left him alone fur more'n tew year, an' he war livin' hyar when the sarcomstance I am goin' to tell yur on took place."

"It wur the year, er maybe the second year arter the war with the greasers; an' the red-skins, so ev'rybody sed, wur wuss'n they had ever been afore. The ole chaps, the Injuns, they calls 'em, sed they never see nothin' like it, an' ef they didn't, who hed a right to know?"

"The year, durin' 'the moon,' the great tribes from Montana fairly swept the face uv the arth over Mexico, an' a powerful grist o' other warriors overrun lots uv the settlements on this side the 'Grande.'"

"I tell you, lad, us rangers were kept bizzzy, an' fur more'n two weeks, purty nigh three, I warn't out ther saddle a hour at a time."

"These times seemed to suit 'Lige Huseton powerful. He 'peared like another man, an' didn't seem to be satisfied at all, unless he war in a scrimmage, or a chasin' a war-party w' ther plunder. He never sed much, but I see that he war doin' a powerful lot uv thinkin', an' so he wur, too."

"Well, things went on like this fer tew days, mebbzy. Allers on the jump, er redly to be, when suddenly, one night, while we wur layin' in a bit uv timber for a hour's rest, a messenger frum the cap'n, who wur away, kim bustin' onto us, his mustang all uv a lather, with orders to make fer Milton, a leetle settlement below, which war about to be cleaned out by the red-skins."

"You know how long it takes fur us to git redly. Well, that night we war rapider nor we generally are. An' arter the new-corn'er's critter could get a long breath, the poor beast, we war in the saddle, an' off, head due south'ard."

in' around the foot uv a purty high cliff, we both heard a kind o' groanin' an' then a sound like a woman's voice."

"I wur lookin' at 'Lige when we heard the noise, an' I see him turn white round the gills, like, es he jumped down offen his mustang, an' begin makin' his way through the chapparal whar the sound kem from."

"I followed, an' afore long we kem out into a bit uv a clarin' at the foot uv the cliff, an' thar, right ag'in' the rock, I see a purty, an' yit as sad a plecter es ever I see er want to see ag'in."

"A ole warrior, he wur Apache, w' long white ha'r, war layin' out onto the grass, his head and shoulders propped up onto the knee uv a young gal who war squatted beside him, an' puttin' water onto a wound in his skull."

"I sw'ar she war the purtiest thing thet I ever sot eyes onto, an' what made me feel quare war thet she wur jess es white es enny woman in the settlements."

"Es we kim onto the bresh, she turned an' looked at us, frightened like, but the next minit turned to the ole Injun, an' begin her sprinklin' water ag'in."

"Look, Rube! for the Lord sake, look! whispers 'Lige, pintin' at the gal."

"Well, what uv her? sez I."

"Don't you see? don't you see? he kept on sayin'. 'That is my child.'"

"Ther deuce it ar! sez I, begin' to feel quare ag'in, but before I could say enny thing more, he had throw'd down his rifle, an' made for the gal, callin' her name like mad es he went."

"At the very first sound of her own name, the gal dropped the ole Injun, who war dead by this, an' jumped to her feet, lookin' es ef she didn't know which way to run."

"But she stood still, though she was powerful scart, an' waited for 'Lige to come up."

"'Twur a long time afore he could persuade the gal who she was, but she remembered a good deal about the ole ranch an' the people in Kaintuck, an' by-an'-by she kem round."

"Now ef ever thar war a happy feller thet night, 'Lige Huseton war."

"Yer see, when the Injuns started fur ther great raid, durin' the moon, they fetched the ole Injun along, es he war a kind uv a medicine or prophet 'mong 'em, an' he fetched his darter, es she war called, along to help him in his foolishnesses."

"He hadde'd to be in this band es we'd

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